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A critic against the Christians

Jonathan Culler

WILLIAM EMPSON
Using Biography
259pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press.
£12.95.
07011 2889 5
Seven Types of Ambiguity
258pp. Hogarth Press. Paperback, £4.95.
07012 0556 3
Collected Poems
119pp. Hogarth Press. Paperback, £3.95.
07012 0555 5
FRANK DAY
Sir William Empson: An annotated bibliography
229pp. Garland. £21.50.
08240 9207 4

Empson was working on *Using Biography* when he died on April 1984. "I am reaching an age", he writes in the preface, "when I had better collect the essays which I hope to preserve." To prevent the collection from being "a mere rag-bag" he chose essays that "do contain more biography than most of my output". Consequently, several notable bodies of work that have accumulated over the years are not collected, such as five essays which defend Donne against the attentions of Dame Helen Gardner, Rosamond Tuve, John Carey and others ("Donne and the Rhetorical Tradition", "Donne the Space Man", "Donne in the New Edition", "Rescuing Donne" and "There is no penance due to Innocence"). An enterprising publisher who combined these with Empson's four essays on Webster and Jonson would have a fine, contentious volume. Also missing are Empson's 100-page introduction to Coleridge, a substantial essay on Shakespeare's narrative poems, and (most regretted) his classic "Arguing in Poetry".

The new Garland bibliography is useful for tracking down such items, though one wishes Frank Day had provided fuller descriptions of the articles to make clear how far one repeats the argument of another, and that he had read and summarized the Italian and German writings on Empson. The descriptive list of writings about Empson (quite full, though Day misses the sustained discussion of the poetry in Veronica Forrest-Thomson's *Poetic Artifice: A theory of twentieth century poetry*) gives one a quick view of his work's fortunes and the world's verdict: youthful brilliance declining into mere eccentricity.

Using Biography will not alter this view. It reprints essays on "Natural Magic and Populism in Marvell's Poetry", Dryden's Deism, *Tom Jones*, Yeats's Byzantium Poems, *The Waste Land* facsimile and *Ulysses*, to which are added later reflections on the first three topics and a new fifty-page essay, "The Marriage of Marvell", which argues, against scholars who have regarded this as a calumny, that Marvell did marry his housekeeper (a generous, populist act), and which attempts, with a winning novelizing zany, to reconstruct doings of his later years. For instance, Marvell died of an ague, and Empson speculates that on a visit to Hull shortly before, he may have become cross with his employers, stalked out of the city to avoid a quarrel, and, walking abroad for the rest of the night, must have stumbled upon a marsh infested with malaria-bearing mosquitoes.

What most fascinates in these pages is the tone, which to a foreigner is delightfully English: Empson writes with a briskness and coarseness, as if he knew his audience, while taking small matters quite seriously but without any professional solemnity. To see in these writings just the cultivated eccentricity of the English man of taste is to miss their immense good will and desire for argument, but readers are not likely to weigh them seriously in assessing Empson's achievement, which will continue to rest on the early criticism and a cluster of witty, impressive poems ("Missing Dates", "High Dive", "To an Old Lady", "Villanelle", "Arachne", "Manchouli", "Let It Go"), now available in the paperback reprint of the *Collected Poems*. Good arguments can be made for the importance of *Some Versions of Pastoral*, which shows the potential scope and subtlety of a criticism attuned to ideology and puts forward valuable concepts that suddenly bring a rhetorical phenomenon into focus, such as *pseudo-parody to disarm criticism*. But what makes Empson the greatest English critic of the century – Eliot and Leavis seem his only serious competitors – is the analysis of language in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and *The Structure of Complex Words*.

His contribution is better savoured in individual discussions than in theoretical summaries. Every page of *Seven Types* can teach someone a good deal about the workings of language in literature, while displaying a distinguished, unpretentious mind working round the complications of experience. "Life involves maintaining oneself between contradictions", Empson writes, and both books show how far

language bears the traces of this activity and the open structure of reflection and social exchange it involves. No one has written with such insight about words such as *rogue*, *fool*, *honest*, or *dog* and the historical layers of their usage, which involve a "humour of mutuality": subtle implications about relations between speakers, listeners, and those spoken of. Such words, "used both to soften the assertion of class and to build a defence against Puritanism", often bring into play a down-to-earth scepticism about absolute values and a recognition of interlocutors' common human condition – implications which Empson brilliantly spells out.

The study of ambiguities in *Seven Types* is often seen as the beginning of the New Criticism, source of a theory of the special, paradoxical character of poetic language, but for Empson ambiguities derive precisely from the continuity between language in poems and language in other situations. "There is always an appeal to a background of human experience", he writes, and words are imbued with the contradictory features of experience and the attempts to come to terms with it. The notes to the *Collected Poems*, which unashamedly paraphrase, elucidate and identify experiences behind the poems, claim a continuity between this condensed, opaque poetic language and the language in which one may continue reflection on the problems it treats. Empson has never subscribed to the notion of a special literary language or even literary use of language. Its complexities come from its exploration of social issues, feelings, and intellectual problems entwined in words, its continuity with social exchange. Some of the most splendid passages in *The Structure of Complex Words* treat ordinary, socially weighted uses of language, as in the famous account of *quite* – much too long to quote – or this example of *honest*:

When one elderly lady says about another, "Really, Maria is getting more and more eccentric. I hardly know what to say. Well, really, it's scarcely honest." A disinterested observer may feel that what Aunt Maria did was quite farcically dishonest, in its petty way, but the suggestion here is that *honest* is such a very elementary virtue that Maria cannot be conceived not to possess it; if you thought of her as not honest you might next have to envisage her as going to jail, a thing quite outside her style of life. The sense of the word *honest* here, I think, must be given as something like "not a member of the criminal class".

What can make the literary use of language special is not its removal from the social sphere

– something that never happens with language – but rather readers' willingness to assume that something engaging is being said, despite difficulties of comprehension. Citing this translation of a Chinese fragment:

Swiftly the years, beyond recall.
Solemn the stillness of this spring morning.
Empson remarks, "two statements are made as if they were connected and the reader is forced to consider their relations for himself. The reason why these facts should have been selected for a poem is left for him to invent; he will invent a variety of reasons and order them in his own mind. This, I think, is the essential fact about the poetical use of language."

Seven Types, in exploring ambiguities, takes them as ambiguities in a view, position or attitude. Empson therefore becomes an investigator of poetic intentions (he objects in *Using Biography* to what he calls "the Winsett law, which says that no reader can ever grasp the intention of an author"), but while for most critics this is a simplifying move, designed to rule out possibilities of meaning, for Empson authorial attitudes are fully as complex and divided as poems themselves: to move from one to another is not to simplify but to open a space of exploration in the complexities of experience and communication. To elucidate passages one speaks of authors, but authors as figures dealing with a language steeped in social intercourse and with experience that provokes divided reactions.

No other critic keeps so firmly in view the social character of language; but Empson's greatest originality here lies in his continuous demonstration that to refer to social and contextual use of words is not to simplify interpretation or cut down ambiguity. On the contrary, recourse to social attitudes and usage generates more complex explanations and more realistically sagacious reflections than does reference to the symbolic dimensions favoured by the critics he opposes.

The "use" of biography "is all for our better understanding of the work", but Empson admits that *Using Biography* "does not always succeed in giving that". Certainly the interest of the book lies not in lessons on the use of biography – the Marvell essay, for instance, does not even attempt to illuminate works – but in the general project that emerges. Like others, I have praised Empson's youthful genius, while dismissing the late essays as hopelessly eccentric. I am not inclined to believe, however, that what is labelled eccentric illuminates the ideology of recent

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criticism. The very fact that we dismiss his views as merely eccentric shows how unprepared we have been to confront the aspects of academic literary criticism he reveals to us.

Empson sees himself as defending authors against a professional academic criticism which eliminates idiosyncratic views that authors may have held so as to interpret their works in the terms of a general aesthetic ideology: a marriage of Eliot and Frye, in which the meaning of a work is a symbolic structure related to a typology heavily informed by Christian doctrine. Most of the biographical essays, like the uncollected essays on Donne and Coleridge, combat the imperative that underlies so much criticism: interpret works as reflections on or of ideologically respectable themes and overlook authors' idiosyncratic views. In "Natural Magic and Populism in Marvell's Poetry", seizing upon Emile Legouis's remark that "with Marvell the fiery liquor that intoxicated the poets of the Renaissance has not entirely evaporated", Empson writes, "Excellent, but what can it mean when translated out of High Mandarin except that Marvell was still able to believe in fairies. Modern Eng. Lit. is extremely shy of making this admission about any serious author, but it was not considered so ludicrous then."

Rescuing authors from peculiarity, critics choose not to condemn or argue against the views their authors express but rather to relate works to the "larger" questions implicit in symbolic structures. A poem should not be about fairies but the relation of the temporal to the eternal, or the redemptive force of aesthetic vision. Students are taught in beginning literature courses that a critical essay should not take issue with a work or author but strive to understand and elucidate. Interpretation therefore passes over controversial beliefs to find higher, orthodox principles. Deconstruction and feminist criticism, for instance, are often attacked for criticizing the logocentrism or sexism of great authors, as though quarrelling with authors were obviously inappropriate; and deconstructive criticism has been awild to claim that it is more revealing than Empson; however, it does not hesitate to dissent from authors' views. Sentence one reads as Empsonian eccentricities are frequently, in fact, his sniping at authors whose themes and preoccupations he finds harmful:

What the Unitarians had chiefly revolted against, though they seem to have lost their battle by being too tactful about it, was the nightmare belief that the Father was given a unique "satisfaction" by the Crucifixion of his Son. It was to this that Eliot returned with a glum eagerness. Around 1930 I was sometimes allowed into Eliot's office to find books for review. . . . I was much impressed by the chalk-white face with the swollen purple lips, and felt confident that he had been brooding over the Crucifixion all night, or some other holy torture.

Empson's main target is the Christianizing interpretations fostered by the critical ideology of the Eng Lit establishment. In "The Variants for the Byzantium Poems" he observes that "English and American critics interpret Yeats's poems as implying Christian doctrines whenever that is possible, and when they find it impossible, they treat the passage with a tactful sigh as merely a lapse, because they cannot conceive of a good man, with a good heart, holding any other religious belief." Rather than relating possible symbols to an orthodox transcendental doctrine, Empson focuses on plot and argument in the Byzantium poems and reconstructs, with the help of early variants, a considerably odder and more interesting story: something of "a science fiction narrative" as he calls it. What he particularly resists is the presumption, fostered by Eliot's and Frye's identification of Tradition with Christianity, and the New Critics' association of poetic language with the paradoxes of religious discourse, that the most powerful interpretation is one which relates elements of the work to a symbolic order where the oppositions and values are essentially those of an aestheticized Christian doctrine.

"When I was young," Empson writes, "literary critics often rejoiced that the hypocrisy of the Victorians had been discredited, or expressed confidence that the operation would soon be complete. So far from that, it has returned in a peculiarly stifling form to take possession of critics of Eng. Lit. Among other things, there is a drive to recover the children for orthodox religious

beliefs; well, showing them how these beliefs operated in standard authors if their own tradition is of course a good way to do it, providing an actual use for the Eng. Lit. with which the schools have been saddled. The material is processed with confident firmness to suit this intelligible policy; and when you understand all that, you may be able to understand how they manage to present James Joyce as a man devoted to the God who was satisfied by the crucifixion.

He calls this "the Kenner smear", after the most energetic and resourceful of the recuperators.

The chief claim of this theory is that Stephen Dedalus is presented not as the author when young (though the book title pretends he is) but as a possible fatal alternative, a young man who has taken some wrong turning or slipped over the edge of some vast drop, so

ment might suggest that he panoptically imposes his anti-religious views, but he claims to take up those important cases where the Christianizing aestheticism has got out of hand. His desire to do battle with Christianity may seem quaint, but in fact he sees how thoroughly modern criticism belongs to what the future will doubtless call the Age of Eliot. Critics of this age have been unable to see our method for what it is; we think it bad taste to argue about religious dogma, but accept Christianity as Tradition; we regard Eliot's religion as a personal matter which, of course, informed the poetry but otherwise need not concern us. We see the religious commitments of American New Critics as merely anecdotal.



William Empson photographed at his home, Studio House, Hampstead, by John Deakin in 1954.

that he can never grow into the wise old author (intensely Christian, though in a mystical paradoxical way) who writes the book.

Empson marshals internal evidence and biographical materials to oppose the American spiritualizers of Joyce, "the basic purpose" of whose "interpreting (I take it no one would be eager to deny this) has been to prove that Joyce was not really opposed to Christianity. From the evidence of the letters and the Ellmann biography, his critics would be more sensible to blame him for an obsessional hatred of the religion." In any event, "He would regard it as an enormous betrayal that, since his death, everything he wrote has been twisted into propaganda for the worship of the torturmonster."

Readers have found such remarks in rather poor taste, signs of an unfortunate obsession: "the most tedious part of his mind", as Denis Donoghue snugly calls it. No doubt the sharpness of Empson's language comes from the frustration of being dismissed as eccentric and tangential when he is trying to combat precisely the unreflective acceptance of Christianity that makes attacks on it seem odd and tedious behaviour. It is the blitheness of critical Christianizing that irritates: "Mr. Wilson," he writes, "invents his ghastly insertion with easy confidence, because the only Heaven he can conceive is the Christian Heaven, where the God who was 'satisfied' by crucifying his son forces his chosen to gloat, as he does eternally in a total realization of the tortures of the damned."

The consistent direction of Empson's criticism

Empson, whose years in the East gave him a different perspective, sees the pervasiveness of unacknowledged Christianity in our critical tradition and the way literature has been enlisted in covert religious campaigns.

In a postscript to Christopher Norris's excellent *William Empson and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism*, Empson registered dissent from the view that "anything I had protied for the last quarter century was irrelevant nonsense, to be dismissed briefly with a sigh, 'I have not'." He maintained: "I have not" been entertaining myself with frippery in my old age. . . . I have continued to try to handle the most important work that came to hand. In 1953, having returned from China, I started teaching in England, so that I had to attend to the climate of opinion in Eng. Lit. Crit. If only because of its effects on the students. This was the peak of the neo-Christian movement. . . . perhaps it was already subsiding by the time I was prepared to attack it, but even so I was not making a fuss about nothing.

If religion has subsided in England, it has not in America, though most teachers of literature tend to dismiss it as a quaint survival - all the while explicating it in the classroom, as they teach Eliot, Milton, Donne, Coleridge, Yeats and Joyce. Students are taught not to question the religious values or principles adduced in literary interpretation. (To argue about religion is inhumane.) In fact, in literary studies religious discourse has become not just respectable but unquestioned. "For the majority of Eng. Lit. critics, especially in America," Empson writes, "it seems to have become a convention to pretend that one does not know of the opinions of the English literati on religion."

one finds these days in literature departments people with all manner of views, but seldom anyone who seriously attacks religion. Marx and Freud, who lie behind militant literary theories of today, began powerful critical analyses of religion, but their followers have neglected to pursue this. Critics have abandoned the historic mission of education: to fight superstition and religious dogmatism. Our most famous critics - Northrop Frye, Wayne Booth, Geoffrey Hartman, Hugh Kenner, Harold Bloom - are promoters of religion. They do not, as is often claimed, make literature a substitute for religion. Rather, they make religion a substitute for literature. For the annual conference of the English Institute in September 1984, Geoffrey Hartman organized a session on the Hebrew Bible, insisting that the idea was not to discuss the Bible as Literature but to reflect on what was sacred in this text. While some of the Supervising Committee (of which I was a member) were not enthusiastic about the idea, not one of us thought to argue that celebration of this powerfully racist and sexist text was pernicious and inappropriate - so accustomed have we become to the idea that to attack or criticize religion would be jejune, tedious, sophomoric.

It could be argued that despite its beneficial effects in certain times and places, religion is historically one of the greatest sources of evil in the world, but we pass over this in silence. We have no evidence for the existence of God, but we do not speak out against idolatry. Religion is the most potent repressive force in America today, but teachers of literature do not raise their voices against it - thinking it irrelevant but all the while honouring the Hartmans and Fries who promote religious values and attitudes. Religion provides the ideological legitimation for anti-feminist politics and other movements of political reaction, yet feminist critics do not attack religion itself, only its patriarchy. In America politicians of all stripes now appeal to God without fear of ridicule. Arguments about prayer in the schools never attack religion itself, and priests call, without fear of reprisals, for laws to conform to their religion. How much responsibility for this state of affairs lies with schools and universities, which have abandoned the task of combating superstition and failed to foster a critique of religion? If universities are at fault, then much blame must fall on teachers of literature, for they, not the scientists, historians, or philosophers, are the ones who have been assigning Milton and Eliot and teaching students not to question their religious values.

Few critics deliberately promote religion; most do the work of legitimization quite unknowingly. I, at any rate, came to see what is happening only through the sustained "eccentricity" of Empson's collected essays, when reflecting on the nature of the orthodoxy that successfully imposed this label. Though these essays will never count among his greatest works of criticism, he should be honoured for them: for the commitment to rationality and the experiential dimensions of language that made him persevere in the attack on superstition, even as he saw everything he wrote dismissed as the sad aberration of a once great mind. The best way to honour him would be to continue the critique of religious values. It is also vital to keep alive the critical, demystifying force of contemporary theory: a force which some are busily working to capture and divert to pious ends. "Down with the priests!" seems an unlikely motto for the academy of today, but Empson helps us to see that we ought to begin by asking ourselves and one another just why it is so very unlikely.

The Library of Congress has produced the second in a series of occasional papers published by its Council of Scholars. *Theory of Criticism: Essays in literature and art* (396p., £44.44/\$44.6) brings together "Literary Criticism in America: Some new directions" by M. H. Abrams and "Interpretation: Response" by James Ackerman, who takes up Roland Barthes's challenge to his literary colleagues to equally applicable to art historians, and offers an equilibrium of interpretation and response. Single copies of the booklet are available free upon request from the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. The book is published by the American Library of Theology, 1000 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Idols of the lecture-room

Graham Hough

HUGH CAREY
Mansfield Forbes and his Cambridge
134pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
0521256801
DENYS THOMPSON (Editor)
The Leavis: Recollections and impressions
207pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
0521254949

Those who wish to believe that the study of great literature conduces to greatness of soul will not find much encouragement in these two memoirs. Forbes and Leavis both belong to the early days of the English Faculty at Cambridge, and anyone who is concerned with this branch of academic archaeology will find much interesting information here. But it is hard to resist the conclusion that we are looking at a smaller pool, tenanted by lesser (if queerer) fish than either the writers or the subjects of these pages have imagined.

Mansfield Forbes, universally known as Manny, was a bundle of scattered talents who, because he never wrote anything, is now largely forgotten. Sweet-natured, unworldly, feckless and ill-organized, he was maddening to many of those who had to deal with him; but he had a genius for a certain kind of teaching, and to the dwindling band who recall his classes (he died in 1936) he will always be a vivid memory. The course as I remember it was called "English Poetry in the ages of Pope and Wordsworth with special reference to Scottish baronial architecture in the fifteenth century", and it began with a poem by D.H. Lawrence. This was considered eccentric, even in the Cambridge of those days; actually, if you waited for it, it was wonderful. Amid a great deal too much flappdoodle, clowning and *fals divers* there was a solid core of the greatest seriousness, sensibility and intelligence. Forbes would write, say, a Wordsworth sonnet on the blackboard. Hewould then read it, very slowly, with the most scrupulous attention to every nuance of rhythm, intonation and pause. He would then comment on the reading, covering the script with diacritical marks and showing the reason for every detail of rendering - no historicisms or Dylan Thomas Organ-notes, the one essential was the fundamental poetic form, seen as indissolubly united with the meaning. The circumambient patter has long since vanished, but I can still recall, after fifty years,

Forbes's exposition of "Surprised by joy, impatient as the wind".

However striking in its day, all this might have been merely ephemeral, but as a matter of fact Forbes's teaching left a few distinct footprints on the sands of time. His second great talent was for gathering like-minded spirits about him and firing them with his enthusiasms. His close friend and collaborator in the new wave of literature teaching was I.A. Richards - very unlike Forbes in the effective management of his public career. Richards had come to literature from philosophy and psychology, and his education in poetry was derived almost entirely from Forbes, as was his memorable way of reading poetry aloud. Richards's "Practical Criticism", the celebrated method by which the balance of literary education was shifted from external history to a far more intimate and internal way of reading, was in large part a systematization of Forbes's practice. The two chapters of Hugh Carey's book which deal with these matters, and the appendix of letters from Richards to Forbes, are a real contribution. The rest is an amiable memorial, but hardly worth the trouble. As L.C. Knights remarks in his foreword, "there's something infuriating about 'Manny's Cambridge'", and it is tiresome to have to search for the genuine nuggets in a waste of frittering and pottering.

The *Leavises* also covers this ground, and extends to more recent and more familiar times. It is a collection of essays and reminiscences, mainly of F.R. but also of (Mrs) Q.D. Leavis, by a number of friends (if that is the word) and former associates. Leavis died in 1975. No miracles have hitherto been reported at his tomb, and it ought to be possible by now to arrive at a dispassionate view of his work; but the present miscellany does not manage to do this. The effluvia of mixed hagiography and resentment that emanates from everything connected with the Leavises is still discernible. Several contributors to this volume compare their first experience of his lectures to a religious conversion; and the reaction to these imbecilities has been a failure to appreciate his achievement.

None of the contributors gives a sober appraisal of the admirable criticism of Leavis's earlier years - though John Harvey makes a start on it. L.C. Knights gives a useful account of the origins of *Scrutiny*. But if we are to discuss Leavis to any purpose there are some

here, between Wells and Bennett on the subject are still being heard today. Only Public Lending Right seems to have won widespread approval.

This anthology might appear at first glance to be of limited appeal, but it is not lacking in general interest and readability. Shaw can be read disagreeing even with himself, at one moment amusingly philosophical about public moment amusingly philosophical about publishers, at the next no less amusingly damning; and there is brief story by Michael Frayn about how he failed to find a story while "travelling for Maugham" - as a recipient of the Somerset Maugham Award in 1967 - which is a small comic gem. But the book has its serious, even sombre side. A number of contributors, notably Storm Jameson, V. S. Pritchett and John Wain, stress, more or less explicitly, the privations inseparable from writing "good books. The editor's favourite piece is John Wain's "Not a Profession but a Condition", and he has printed it last. Asked in 1972 to offer a few facts and observations about authorship, Wain finally steeled himself to reply that it was only by not facing the facts, the threat of poverty, poor health etc. that he had ever been able to sustain a literary career; and, ever been able to sustain a literary career; and, though a subscriber to the *Author*, he confessed, in all sincerity, that reading it made him feel suicidal.

It would be inaccurate to portray the *Author* as a dismal publication; however, it draws on writers of quality, and is invariably stimulating. Still, Wain's piece deserves to be remembered as a corrective to the idea which "Best of British" and the Booker Prize may have fostered, that the *Author* is a place where one can find a desirable or not, the arguments, reprinted

necessary distinctions to be made. He was not an original thinker; his view of the history of English poetry was taken over from Eliot, almost without change. What he did, in *Revaluations* (1936) for instance, was to add body and substance and detailed instantiation to what Eliot had suggested only in hints and nudges. You could quarrel with the conclusions of Leavis's arguments, but the evidence had rarely before been exposed with such discernment and such penetration. A new literary movement was coming into being in the 1920s, on as large a scale as the Romantic movement of the last century; and this involved a new valuation of our whole cultural past. A large part of the proper response to this situation is to be found in Leavis's writing; and anyone who goes back without prejudice to his early work can hardly fail to see it. But applying the same standards we can hardly fail to see also the layers of self-protecting flannel in which as time went on his utterances became increasingly wrapped. This is already evident in his Lawrence book (1955), and in the later writings it becomes a pathological inflation that distorts his perceptions even on the rare occasions when he had something new to say.

Q.D. Leavis in later life came to feel that her part in the Leavis movement had been slighted. There is some justification for this. They presented such a joint embattled front to the world that she was often seen as part of the defensive equipment. She was in fact an extremely acute critic in her own right, as her collected essays show. In marked contrast to her social persona, she was a lively and attractive writer, with a far greater range of responses and a far wider hospitality to the varieties of the literary scene than her husband. In a book entitled *The Leavises* this

might have been more clearly acknowledged.

It is a question how much importance can be attributed to academic literary criticism of the Leavis kind. *Scrutiny* was read by a zealous minority of dons, schoolmasters and students. Its impact on the general literary world was nil. It published six poems in its whole career, four of them by Ronald Bottrill; and after the first enthusiasm for Eliot had passed it maintained an attitude of steady hostility or contempt for nearly all the original work of its contemporaries. By contrast Eliot's most influential criticism all made its way in the ordinary literary traffic of the time - articles in the *TLS* or the *Athenaeum*; and it could be argued, against Leavis's passionate conviction, that intelligent and disinterested literary journalism (not too easy to come by) does far greater service to literature than high-pressure lucubrations for a scholastic coterie, with all their temptations of inbreeding and sectarian wrangling.

At best academic memoirs are not a very animating literary genre, and this is a particularly towering example, the more so as it contrives to omit almost all reference to anything of intellectual interest that was going on in the Cambridge of its time. There are decent straightforward tributes of friendship, from Michael Tunmer for F.R.L. and from Nora Crook for Q.D.L.; otherwise it is a melancholy sequence of *Schwarzmer* followed by rejection, until in the end all the one-time disciples have been cast off as traitors. However, these dark byways of the scrutinized life are relieved by a few neutral tones. If you want to know who got what job when, M.C. Bradbrook's article will tell you. And Raymond Williams grows eloquent about what happened on the Faculty Board in 1963 and how he saw Dr Leavis running down King's Parade.

Imagine a City

Imagine a city. It is not a city you know. You approach it either by river or by one of four roads, Never by air. The river runs through the city, The roads enter at the four points of the compass. There are city walls, old ones, now long decayed But they are still there, bits of a past it once had. Approach it now (shall we say) by the road from the east. You can see the ruined gate from a mile away. And, beyond the gate, towers that may be temples or tombs. It is evening, and amoke here and there is rising in drifts, So meal are being prepared, you suppose, in thousands of houses. There is a smell of roast meat, a succulent odour.

Now enter the city, go through the eastern gate. Great birds, like vultures, shift on its broken tiles. The street is front of you is obscured by the setting sun, A yellow-red ball in a dazzling haze of brilliance. The paving under your feet is uneven. You stumble, Clutching a door that leans to your hand as you take it.

And now for the first time you are uneasy: No one is in the street, or in the side-turnings, Or leaning out from the windows, or standing in doorways. The fading sunlight conspires with the drifting smoke, Yet if there were people here surely you'd see them, Or, at the least, hear them. But there is silence.

Yet you go on, if only because to go back now Seems worse - worse (shall we say) than whatever Might meet you ahead, as the street narrows, and alleys Flow in hither and thither, a dead-end of tangles. Looping forwards and sideways, neither here nor there, but somehow Changing direction like water wind-caught abruptly.

And there you are, now. You may find the western gate. It must lie straight ahead, the north to your right, The south to your left. But where is the river You heard about (you say) at the beginning? That is for you to find out, or not to find out. It may not, in any case, serve as a way of escape.

You imagined a city. It is not a city you know.

ANTHONY THWAITE

John Deakin 1954

Saith the king already

Galen Strawson

JOSEPH HELLER
God Knows
353pp. Cape. £8.95.
022402281

Why do they do it, these major, sexy, sensitive Jewish American novelists? Why do they heftle off into the grandest parts of the past in search of *Ancient Evenings*, or *Creation*, or *God Knows*? Has America lost its epic dimensions? Does the last frontier now feel closed? Is the myth so diminished, the future so unpromising? Is the past the only place left for truly American imaginative expansionism? Go figure that one out, saith Joseph Heller's King David. God knows.

Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he got no beat. Wherefore Joseph Heller went down into him where he lay in Jerusalem, and scored an exclusive 350-page interview before it was too late. And it turned out that David son of Jesse son of Obed son of Booz had done a whole lot of things we had no idea about. He not only killed Goliath of Gath (though some people say that it was Elhanan son of Jair of Bethlehem that did this - 2 Sam 21:19). He not only wrote the Psalms (though it is now thought unlikely that he wrote any of them). He not only smote the Philistines over and over and over again. He also wrote Proverbs (his lumpy son Solomon - that *naar*, that *putz* - just noted them all down and then passed them off as his own) and the Song of Solomon too. He personally anticipated just about every over-quoted line in Shakespeare, he wrote and set to music appreciable portions of Homer, Virgil and Milton, as well as Schiller's "Ode to Joy". He composed Bach's Mass to B Minor, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mozart's Requiem, and he is timeless furious with that Florentine Michelangelo Buonarroti for portraying him as uncircumcised. No shit? No shit.

And that's what *God Knows* is like. David is a Jewish American novelist, and it is in his points out inexcusable that no book of the Bible is named after him. Who is to blame for that? God, that's who. Like Saul before him, David has got into one of those "ongoing, open-ended Mexican stand-offs with God". They stopped speaking to each other after David swined Bathsheba and arranged for her husband Uriah the Hittite to be killed by the Ammonites. David had had it with God: God is a sneak and a murderer; He turned poor Saul into a paranoid schizophrenic with His outrageous caprices. He's into spitework and He may even be dead. But He knows. And David misses Him terribly, oow that he's stricken in years; though he'd hate to admit it.

God Knows is too long, and Heller's King David is at his dullest with his versions of Genesis and Exodus. He is second-rate on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. The jokes fail, and the literary grasshopper becomes a burden. He is much better, however, on Saul and himself, on his wars and wives, on his love for Ahigall and his passion for Bathsheba, on his unsatisfactory sons and Joab his bloody, indestructible general. He is clever and funny and snotty and retells 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings at great length and in exhaustive detail, incorporating useful additions from the later and more sanctimonious account of his life in 1 Chronicles and snatching quantities of good bits from Proverbs, the Song of Songs, W. H. Auden and so forth. His linguistic promiscuity is gleeful, outrageous and enjoyably childish, and he is magnificently repetitious among the repetitions, combining a very high degree of accuracy in his use of his biblical sources with wild irresponsibility in their elaboration.

But there's a curiosity. Why does King David, a man familiar with Shakespeare (that *gonoph*), Nietzsche, Freud, Otto Rank and the PLO, not profit from modern biblical scholarship? Why doesn't he supplement the beauties of the Authorized Version with the equal beauties of the New English Bible? The latter improves on the former at many points, and David, a noted Hebraist, should have known that.

For the most part he has good reasons for sticking to the Authorized Version. He says:

in the syntax that has gone astray with time ("thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn" is one of his favourite similes). He exploits the Authorized Version's oddities and ambiguities - one of the great problems of his declining years is that he still wants to sleep with the ageing Bathsheba, who won't have it, being "aick of love" like the Bride in the Song of Solomon. But he also spends some time castigating the King James team for highlighting his thing with Jonathan ("I can tell you this: we were never fags . . . You want to know who was a fag? King James the First of England was a fag, that's who was a fag. His court was full of fags. And that's why his scholars relied more on Greek sources than Hebrew . . ."). And elsewhere he misses the very sort of details he enjoys the most. For the Authorized Version is apparently wrong to say that Bathsheba was "purified from her uncleanness" when she first lay with David (2 Sam 11:4); in fact she hadn't finished "being purified after her period", and that was part of the trouble. The Authorized Version is also wrong about the mulberry trees gambit - the time David smote the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer (1 Chron 14:14). Those mulberry trees were aspens; and it looks as if the Israelites and men of Judah didn't sneak through the trees at all, contrary to what Heller supposes. Nor did General Abner really ask whether he was a "dog's head", the time he lost his temper with Ishbosheth the son of Saul (2 Sam 3:8 - a moment David relishes); the word he used was "baboon".

This doesn't matter at all, of course. Heller is whooping it up. He is pumping the Authorized Version for the fantastic incongruity effects it produces when crossed with "fuck"-rich American slang, treating it at times like a wonderful playpen in which he can safely go completely out of control. This is all to the good, but there are undoubtedly moments when Heller's huge pleasure in his own confections is just not enough, and when the whole hook begins to look like a rickety pun-dispenser, a vehicle for jokes. At other times, though, it hums with invention, and the biblical story connects and moves - even though the characters are bewildered by their own archaic utterances: "Ask me to this day what I thought I was talking about when I said 'Lord of hosts' and I still will be unable to tell you. I have many phrases whose meaning is likewise unintelligible to me, but rhetoric is rhetoric." (Perhaps that's why Bathsheba is angling for a word-processor.)

So *God Knows* is something more than a labour of laughter. The plots and campaigns, in particular, are vividly and precisely described. Heller has a will most incorrect to heaven, and a mind like a dictionary of quotations, but he also has a sharply focused and intelligently sentimental eye for human love and aspiration, suffering, and folly. His account of David, Bathsheba and Solomon is a kind of large-scale Jewish family joke (and he really ought to have said something about Bathsheba's other three sons by David, Shimea, Shobab and Nathan - Luke, after all, traces Jesus's human descent from David through Nathan, not Solomon). But the relation between David and the increasingly inconstant Saul ("He forgives and forgets . . . and then he forgets he's forgiven") is in a way very skilfully dramatized. And because Heller sticks so closely to the Bible for all the essential elements of the story, one feels at times that what he has achieved is not just an entirely fictional and frivolous embroidery on a biblical theme, but an at least partly accurate and covertly acute psychological illumination of the biblical figures themselves - not, perhaps, as they really were in history, but at least as they are portrayed in the Bible as we have it.

The 1984 Dylan Thomas Award (the award was established in 1983 to encourage writers working in the two genres in which Thomas's achievement is celebrated - poetry and the short story; the first award went to the poet Peter Reading, has been won by Rose Tremain for an entry of four short stories, three of which are included in her most recent book *The Colonel's Daughter*. Joanna Motion, reviewing the book to the *TLS* of February 17 this year, wrote: "While [Rose Tremain] is sometimes tempted into a quasi-pastoral that loses touch with its function, the risks she takes are handsomely rewarded".

Flowing on

Patricia Craig

REBECCA WEST
This Real Night
266pp. Macmillan. £9.95.
0333 38279 X

This Real Night, Rebecca West's last novel, is the second part of an uncompleted trilogy which began in 1957 with *The Fountain Overflows*. The title of the opening volume, the Roses, Rosamunds and Cordelias among the leading characters, the name "Lovegrove", even the emphasis placed on the acquisition of musical expertise: all these denote a certain lushness in the undertaking. In the first part, however, the threatened emotional onrush is kept at bay by means of the child's-eye-view imposed by the narrator. The time is 1900 or thereabouts, and "Lovegrove" is a district of South London where the Aubrey family has fished up after some vicissitudes. The glamour attaching to fecklessness and insecurity is the quality the novel - autobiographical in feeling, if not in every last particular - evokes in retrospect.

The dramatic presence of an incalculable, brilliant father, typically deficient in the sense of responsibility, is what makes the childhood of Rose Aubrey both scintillating and troubled. Allowances have to be made for Papa's peculiarities, among which is an unaccountable fondness for delinquent behaviour. Papa, Mamma - a scrawny, eccentric, gifted one-time pianist, who keeps things ticking over in the most unpromising circumstances - three daughters and a son make up the family, and a cousin, Rosamund, soon makes her presence felt in the saga ("a saga of the century" was how Rebecca West described the projected trilogy). The Aubrey girls are scorned at school on account of an element of disreputability in their upbringing; part of the novel's drift, of course, is to make us savour the richness of a way of life not governed by suburban proprieties.

The younger Aubreys, as Intrepid as the Railway Children, and as hard-working as the Possals of *Ballet Shoes*, look to themselves to provide a future income for the family (all except the youngest, Richard Quin, who, like his father, has an abundance of charm to see him through). Rose and Mary are potential concert pianists, their mother's pupils to begin with, and later scholarship holders at renowned academies; even talentless Cordella, making a show of herself on various concert platforms (and encouraged in her self-delusion by a foolish violinist named Beatrice - "Bay-ah-tree-chay" - Beever) sees herself as the family's mainstay. Cordella's meretricious performance, incidentally, point up the difference between genuine and imaginary artistic abilities; the trouble arising from possession of the latter is one of the novel's minor themes.

In her earlier fiction (that published between 1918 and 1936) Rebecca West shows herself as heavy-handed, infelicitously playful, and apt to go in for mannered innuendoes; *The Fountain Overflows*, her most engaging novel, is largely free of these defects. It is written with animation and occasional asperity; and the introduction into the story of such odd features as poltergeist infestation and a neighbourhood murder is carried out with aplomb. Childhood, for Rebecca West, is nothing if not constricting ("A child is an adult temporarily enduring conditions which exclude the possibility of happiness", she wrote) and the corresponding restriction of the writer's scope. In this novel, actually makes for distinctiveness of tone. But what of *This Real Night*? Well, the earlier title may suggest either a cornucopia-like abundance, which suits the book if it's attached to, or a gushing manner, which unfortunately isn't appropriate for the sequel. The new, posthumous novel consists of various set-pieces, interspersed with great sweeps and flows of feeling as unimaginable happiness or misery affects the narrator.

Among the set-piece depictions are a terrible social visit ("That horrid common woman does not matter," said Cordella), and a set-to in a riverside pub ("There has been a hateful scene in the bar"). Life continues for the Aubreys, in spite of father's defection (he took off



separating himself completely from the family he was never very securely joined to). Money is no longer a problem, after the sale of some family portraits; the careers of Rose and Mary follow their expected course; and Cordella Rosamund, who might appear bovine if it wasn't for the atmosphere of adulation which surrounds her, achieves satisfaction as a children's nurse. We are continually directed to reverse Cousin Rosamund; and as for Richard Quin, endowed by the author with irrepressible wit, he seems specially designed to bar out the fatalistic notion that the superior portion of that particular generation had died in war. The novel takes us up to 1915, and ends with a gathering of family and friends, and a couple of deaths, one protracted.

Where was the "saga of the century" going next? Further chapters exist, and will duly appear, the publishers assure us. No doubt they will be interesting and evocative. However, by extending her novel of childhood into a family history, Rebecca West puts herself in the company of certain authors - Dorothy Richardson and Antonia White come to mind - who splendidly converted the early part of their lives into the material of fiction, and allowed things to go away later. Glop off, in these cases, seems to be a by-product of going on.

A letter from Michael Sissons on the publisher's history of *This Real Night* appears on page 134 of this issue.

Crime file

JOHN SMITH
Patterson's Volunteers
253pp. Century. £8.95.
07126 03085

Luke Spence, a pilot with seven years' experience of flying in the Arctic, is hired by a maniacal businessman called Rollo Smith to search Greenland for a squadron of Mustangs which vanished there at the end of the Second World War. Good flying sequences in the altered old de Havilland Beaver, plenty of action; and convincing icy blizzards, but the effect is dulled by a relentlessly frenetic pace.

DOUGLAS CLARK
Bonquet Garri
204pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0575 03443

Three girls die of poisoning on the same day in the same small town. The deaths must be connected, though medical evidence is conflicting. Baffled, the local police call in Scotland Yard, and get Masters and Green, Douglas Clark's famous duo. Even when the poison has been identified - which takes some time, and is likely to provide the reader with a surprise - there's still quite a tricky little case for the experts to solve. Ingenious and well put together, like all Douglas Clark's stories, though the policeman's menus might be presented in a little too much detail.

Thinking in combination

Ben Pimlott

LISAANNE RADICE
Beatrice and Sidney Webb: Fabian socialists
342pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £8.95).
0333 361830

It is odd that the Webbs, founding parents of modern social science, the welfare state, the Labour Party and much else besides, should still be widely regarded as a dull and desiccated pair. There has been much evidence to the contrary: the Webb letters, and Beatrice's diary, which reveals its author as a fine and often funny writer with a keen understanding of her fellow beings. Now, drawing mainly on these sources, Lisaanne Radice further exposes the myth: showing in this sensitive double biography that the basis of the Webbs' achievement was a remarkable love story. In so doing she skilfully weaves together the public and the private.

Of the two partners, Beatrice - though further from the working class in her own origins - is the easier to explain. Politics was in her blood. Both grandfathers had been MPs, her father missed election (as a Conservative) by twenty votes, and several sisters married politicians, actual or aspiring. There was also a streak of messianic madness: Beatrice's maternal grandfather was put in an asylum after seeking to lead the Jews back to Palestine, while her mother occupied herself between bouts of religious melancholia with the testing exercise of learning foreign languages in other foreign languages.

Beatrice herself was spurred from an early age by feelings of guilt and remorse, and of a need to discipline unworthy passions. "I am very disgusted with myself," she wrote when she was fourteen. "When I am in the company of any gentleman I cannot help wishing and doing all I possibly can to attract his attention. . . I am very very wicked." Self-disgust and a desire for attention - particularly,

perhaps, male attention - were recurrent themes throughout her adult life. As a young woman, another pattern set in: great swings of mood from powerful, brittle happiness to near-depression. Often she came close to breakdown. "I am never at peace with myself now - the whole of my past looks like an irrefragable blunder," she wrote at twenty-eight. "I struggle through each new day - waking with suicidal thoughts early in the morning . . . living a life without hope . . . no future, but the vain repetition of the breaking waves of feeling."

A focus for unhappiness was her real or imagined relationship with "Radical Joe" Chamberlain, almost twice her age and the most glamorous politician and most eligible widower of the day. For six self-punishing years Beatrice considered herself in love. Her interest in charitable work preceded by a few months her first meeting with Chamberlain. Dr Radice shows how, in the period that followed, Beatrice's tortured emotions served to encourage a growing obsession with the method and uses of social investigation. Dismissing suggestions that she should stick to women's issues, she embarked on an inquiry into the Co-operative Movement. By early 1890, when she was thirty-one, her political ideas were fast approaching their destination. "At last I am a Socialist!" she wrote. It was at this time that she caught out Sidney Webb.

For Sidney it was love at first sight. For Beatrice, there was a combination (apparent in other aspects of her life) of physical repulsion and intellectual fascination. The beautiful princess had met her frog. "His tiny (adpole body, unhealthy skin, lack of manner, cockney pronunciation, poverty, are all against him", she wrote. Sidney persisted. "I do not love you", she told him firmly. ". . . And this being the case - the fact that I do not love you - I cannot, and will never, make the stupendous sacrifice of marriage." "It seems an extraordinary end to the once brilliant Beatrice Potter", she wrote when she succumbed. In fact it was a beginning: the start of a marriage so

complete that "the firm of Webb" became an utterly homogeneous institution. A few years later Beatrice described the delights of "the act of combined thinking in which the experience and the hypotheses of the two intellects become inextricably mingled, so that we are both unconscious of what we have each of us contributed." Beatrice had found Chamberlain intellectually antagonistic; it is interesting, therefore, that others should see Radical Joe-like qualities in Sidney. There was, however, a difference: as the *Pall Mall Gazette* put it, "Mr Sidney Webb has a great literary gift and a philosophical conception of social progress to which Mr Chamberlain can lay no claim".

Radice is able to shed little new light on the origins of that conception, which remain as mysterious as ever. Sidney's socialism was scarcely a reaction: nor was it fired by any personal knowledge of poverty. It seems, rather, to have sprung from a generous acknowledgment that his own opportunities as a scholarship boy and graduate of evening classes were denied to the majority of Londoners. Crucial to Sidney's socialism were three beliefs: first, that a socialist society needed to be directed by trained professionals; second, that Britain was on the way to achieving such a society and that state collectivism was a stage along the way; and third, that the socialist aim should be the creation among influential people of a climate of opinion favourable to socialist schemes. All owed something to his own experience as a self-taught intellectual and - for eleven formative years - as a civil servant in the paternalist Colonial Office.

The Webbs' commitment to "the inevitability of gradualness" - more a product of optimism than of caution - led enemies to consider them compromisers. In fact, and here Radice is insufficiently emphatic, their socialist vision was clear and extreme, well expressed in Clause Four of the Labour Party Constitution, one of Sidney's legacies. Their objective, as Beatrice once put it, was "not a vague and sentimental desire to 'ameliorate the condition

of the masses', but a definite economic form: a peculiar industrial organisation - the communal or state ownership of Capital and Land . . . the transference to the community of the means of Production as distinguished from the facility to produce".

At the same time they were demerits. Attempts have been made to use the Webbs' final phase as earnest propagandists for Stalinist Russia to suggest that they had always been concerned with bureaucratic efficiency to the exclusion of all else. Radice rightly rejects this accusation, showing that, far from being totalitarian centralizers, the Webbs remained throughout their lives pluralists and advocates of devolved power. Their failure - not, of course, theirs alone - was a failure of observation, encouraged by a realization in the bleak conditions of the 1930s that earlier optimism had been misplaced. If, however, there remains something disturbing about the delusions of the Webbs in their dotage, this is because in their prime they were so consistently far-sighted. Central to their message, and still insufficiently heeded on the Left, was an appreciation that to control state power it is necessary first to understand state administration. But, above all, it was the Webbs' perceptions and campaigning that led to a gradual acceptance, which even the present government has not wholly undermined, of poverty as a disease of society and not a sign of individual moral failure.

Lisaanne Radice's comparatively short book is not the last word on the Webbs. It is, however, the best and most useful introduction to their lives and work that has been written, binding the awesome joint enterprise into a coherent whole with sympathy and understanding.

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Holding the wolf by the ears

Anthony Birley

J. B. CAMPBELL
The Emperor and the Roman Army: 31 ac-
ad 235
468pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £30.
0198148348
LAWRENCE KEEPIE
The Making of the Roman Army: From
Republic to Empire
271pp. Batsford. £14.95.
0713436514

The Greek historian Polybius, who had served as a cavalry commander and was a close friend of Roman generals, ascribed Rome's amazing conquest of the Mediterranean to two principal advantages: her balanced constitution and her army. Little more than a century later the republic had fallen and the army, which had been the instrument of its overthrow, had to be re-constructed and controlled. This was no easy task and it was the main achievement of Caesar Augustus to tame the legions and disperse them to the barbarous fringes. But they re-emerged from time to time to play a role in politics as well as defending the frontiers. Not really illegitimately, it could be urged - the electoral assembly of the old republic had been the *comitia centuriata*, the adult males under arms. All the same, their occasional reassertion of these notional rights was a unifying, indeed murderous business, as the civil wars of ad 68-9, 193-7, and the third century demonstrated. Even when war was averted it was had enough as when the empire was auctioned by the Praetorian Guard on March 28, ad 193. The upper classes relied on the ruler to prevent the nightmare of legions in revolt from realization. J. B. Campbell aptly applies a saying of Tiberius Caesar, that "he was holding a wolf by the ears", to the position of emperor vis-à-vis troops.

The Roman imperial army has never lacked students in many countries, but it might be suggested that Germany and Britain, themselves imperial powers, have taken the lion's share of the research. This is true, but the main relics of Rome, not least the epigraphic, in these countries on the margin of the old empire, were military. The organized industry of the Prussian Academy, led by Theodor Mommsen, launched modern research. F. J. Haverfield, Camden Professor at Oxford, was a correspondent, and contributed to the *Ephemeris Epigraphica*. The first volume of the revised *Realencyclopädie*, published in 1893, contained Clehorius on "ala", his "cohorts" followed in 1900. Dessau's *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* began to make the evidence more accessible. Domaszewski showed how complex it was with *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres* (1908). G. L. Cheesman responded to all this with *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army*. But it was already 1914; Cheesman fell in action, and Haverfield died soon after the war. German productivity resumed unabated, with the great article on "legio" in RE, most of it by Emil Ritterling (1924-5). H. M. D. Parker reaped the benefits soon after with *The Roman Legions* (1928), and new British talent began to appear. Another war was to restrict progress, but after it fruitful co-operation resumed, marked in 1958 by the Oxford D Phil thesis (also never published) by a German pupil of Ronald Syme, Walter Schmitthenner. One may also note the revision of Domaszewski by B. Dobson (1967), and the books by G. R. Watson and G. Webster (both of 1969). Dobson and Watson were graduates of Durham, source of many valuable contributions to Roman military studies.

Now Oxford returns to the fray. Dr Campbell's book began as a D Phil thesis, supervised first by Fergus Millar, now the Camden Professor, and then by P. A. Brunt. Millar's predecessor. Its title recalls Millar's own *The Emperor in the Roman World* (1977), to which Campbell explicitly ascribes his inspiration. Millar, indeed, excluded just the aspects here covered: the emperor's "relations with the army and with individual soldiers". The new work thus arouses high expectations. It is in ten chapters, the first a prologue and the last an epilogue, with the remaining eight grouped into four parts. Parts One, "The Association of Emperor and Army - by far the longest - and Four, "Emperor, Army and the Republic", some any

pages, are the most directly relevant to the theme. Part Two, "The Soldier and the Law", is in some ways the most useful portion of the book. Together with the three appendices, it could usefully have been expanded into a separate monograph. (Not all, however, may accept the arguments in appendix Three on privileges of marriage and citizenship on discharge, although they will doubtless stimulate discussion.) Part Three, "The Organisation of Military Command", is rather too brief. Campbell refers to his article of 1975, "Who were the *virii militares*?" More of that could have been reproduced and the opportunity taken to revise and expand the list there presented, which is seriously defective - as many who cite the article will not have realized; but probably Campbell also was unaware.

Most of his material is familiar enough, but, as he comments in his preface, it "has not received a coherent analysis" in this form. The book clearly serves a useful purpose and will be read with interest and enjoyment. It is a pity, perhaps, that it stops in ad 235 (with limited forays into the later third century), although extension to Diocletian might have entangled Campbell with the *Historia Augusta*. As it is, he cannot resist quoting, albeit with proper mention that it is fiction, a passage from the life of Severus Alexander, and he ends with Septimius Severus's supposed dying comment: "I have been everything, and I have gained nothing from it", also from the *HA*. Why not quote Aurelius Victor's earlier (and snappier) version ("Cuncta fui, conducti nihil"), which the hagiographer merely adapted?

For the most part, Campbell is at home with the literary sources, but his handling of epigraphic and papyrological material is shaky. For example, while he accepts Speidel's argument that auxiliary pay was five-sixths of the legionary rate, a few pages later he refers to the men in *P. Gen. Lat.* 1 as legionaries - yet Speidel's case depends on their being in the *auxilia*. It is not good enough to cite diplomats from *ILS* or the *Fasti Ostienses* from *AE*. On the other hand, it is useful to cite *ILS* refer-

Worshipping the ruler

A. N. Sherwin-White

S. R. F. PRICE
Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial cult in Asia Minor.
289pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0525129307

The author of this remarkably detailed study succeeds in giving a new look to the practice of the imperial cult by the Greek-speaking subjects of Rome in the provinces of Asia Minor. He strips off the assumptions made by modern scholars, motivated by a monotheistic background, that religion can only be concerned with the individual and his spiritual needs, and sees the imperial cult as it was - the combination of a political fiction with the recognition of the emperor as more than human in the scale and effect of his power. Hence the living ruler was exalted by the Greek world into a being closely akin to, though never fully identified with, the divine as understood in the terms of Greek polytheism. This concept is established by a detailed examination of every aspect of the imperial cult, as revealed by the personal inscriptions of the secular priesthood, the fragments of regulatory documents, the physical arrangements of temples, scenes depicted on provincial coins, and by a number of literary references, pagan and Christian. From these multiple and scattered sources S. R. F. Price constructs a surprisingly full account of the workings of the system, through its ceremonies, rituals and celebrations in "Games" in which the emperor is honoured in the representation of his image, which was all that the eastern provinces saw of the emperors for at least a century.

There were two levels of imperial cult, as practised by the individual Greek cities and hellenized villages, and as maintained by the representative Councils of each province with central shrines at privileged cities. The imperial image is often housed in the temples of the Olympian deities, but it never displaces them

ences as well as *CIL*. But when referring to individual legions, with acknowledgement to Ritterling, Campbell merely reproduces Ritterling's citations of *CIL*. The whole section on legendary titles is unreliable - Lawrence Keppie's appendix provide an admirable corrective. Campbell's unfamiliarity with epigraphy is repeatedly apparent, since, ignoring conventions, he uses square brackets for round ones, to expand abbreviations, and pointed ones instead of square, for gaps in the text. Mercifully he does not attempt to reproduce many texts in full. Where he does, some are given as though they were complete when they are not. The worst specimen is on p 407, the *cursus*-inscription of Cl. Paternus Clementianus, with several mistakes in transcription as well as aberrant brackets. There are numerous misprints or misspellings, especially of proper names, ancient and modern, and of German words.

But the author has been careless, so as to mislead himself on occasion. Discussing the *Tabula Banasitana*, among other errors, he refers to "Titus Piso whose function is unknown". This person was actually called T(itus) F(avius) Piso, and he was prefect of the *onna* in ad 179, two years after the date of the *Tabula*; information available as long ago as 1960. In the addenda to Meiggs's *Roman Ostia*.

Lawrence Keppie could also be called a product of Oxford, but *The Making of the Roman Army* is not his thesis, which was *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy, 47-14 ac*, published last year. He has worked in the field, in Italy as well as on the Antonine Wall and elsewhere in Roman Britain; and has read very widely - making thorough use, incidentally, of Schmitthenner's unpublished thesis. He starts with the Servian reforms and rushes rapidly on, in the first chapter, via the Punic wars, Book VI of Polybius and Pydna, to Numantia and Schulten's excavations. Then a chapter on Marius' reforms - with suitable caution on the extent to which the enrolling of the *capite censi* was really revolutionary - and their aftermath, brings him to the end of 59 ac, the year of

and seldom claims equality. This demonstration is contrary to modern doctrine, which sees the Imperial cult either as an unreal formality or as displacing a degraded "Olympian" religion. So far from degradation the Olympian gods enjoy a remarkable renaissance in the life of the Principate. Their temples were built or rebuilt with a frequency that rivals the new constructions of the Imperial cult, and their traditional system of priesthoods, public sacrifices and private endowments, continued unabated. But in Greek cities such as Ephesus and Pergamum the sheer scale of the Imperial shrines altered the whole profile of the civic centres. The work was done at the expense of cities and private benefactors, but Dr Price has some difficulty in showing that the civic populations as a whole supported the Imperial cult beyond the scale of an "unreal formality". There is enough evidence from half a dozen cities, large and small, to show that the citizenry was expected to attend major occasions in their best garb, while their young men and daughters took a special part in the ceremonies. But it is only at the Games that the general masses were certainly present, drawn especially by the introduction of gladiatorial shows.

The Games were in the early Empire held only every four years, but occasions multiplied, and by the second century ad they were at least annual and lasted many days. It is argued, with some over-emphasis, that they were as much religious as secular occasions. But the best evidence for this is cited by astrology from "Olympian" festivals. The cult was doubtless intended to involve the whole civic population in its major occasions. But everything in the elaborate analysis of cult organization that the author presents suggests that it was in the hands of the civic elites. They were by education men of letters; rather than philosophers, as Price might have remarked, and hence likely to favour a schema so closely connected with tradition. Yet philosophical writers too can be cited as tolerating the cult.

The cult originated in the period of the Hellenistic Kings of the Greek world. It was not

Caesar's first consulship. After this he is able to expand his treatment, with chapters on the conquest of Gaul, the civil wars of 49-30 ac, the emergence of the imperial legions, the age of Augustus, and the army of the early empire. The text is complemented by forty-one small photographs, their subjects mainly sculptural, numismatic and epigraphic, some of them unfamiliar, and the value of them all is greatly enhanced by the twelve-page appendix which describes them in detail. Here and throughout the book Dr Keppie is thoroughly *au fait* with epigraphy, and the appendixes on the legions are a clear and illuminating guide. There are also fifty-two line-drawings - maps, diagrams, battle plans, plans of camps and fortresses, arms and armour, and inscriptions, including eleven of the Perugia sling bullets, some of which, as he dryly comments, "exhibit an abbreviated coarseness" about the opposing generals of 41 ac.

As with Batsford's other "Studies in Archaeology", the book is aimed at "both historians and archaeologists, whether professional or amateur", all of whom will find much to enjoy and applaud, as well as considerable instruction: the seven appendixes, the notes and bibliography (helpfully arranged by chapter and subject) occupy some sixty pages; and the index is very full. Apart from a few misspellings or minor slips, the production is impeccable, and there will be little for scholars to question. But it is puzzling to read that "until recently the expansion of VAL to VALERIA [in the title of the Twentieth Legion] rested on the testimony of Dio". Several inscriptions *CIL* have it in full, for example that from Tuccator of the former chief centurion Sulpicius Casellianus. And why should the name of Monimus, soldier in the First Cohort of Iulians, be Semitic? Monimus is Greek - unlike the name of the man's father, Ieromachus. The legions predominate here, as is proper; but the *auxilia*, the fleet, and the Rome garrison are not neglected. Haverfield would have liked this book, Mommsen and Ritterling would not have disdained it.

imposed on the cities by their overlords but generated in response to the supremacy of the kings, and later transferred to the Republican power of Rome, envisaged as the goddess Roma, and in the late Republic extended to proconsular governors. But its great development came under the Empire, when Augustus and his successors, while nominally deprecating any form of personal cult before their death, when in the Italian tradition they became *divi*, akin to the gods, yet encouraged the creation of representative Councils in each hellenized province with central shrines of the living emperor, combined with the divinity of Roma, while individual cities were left free to make their own apparatus. It may be due to Roman constraint that Augustus was deified in his lifetime to official cult under his Roman title of *Imperator Caesar Augustus*, though documents from Greek cities frequently cited him as a divinity and even offered him "whatever could enhance his godhead". Yet throughout the Imperial period there is a baffling distinction between the form of prayers addressed "to" the Olympian gods, and those normally offered "on behalf of" the emperor, though in other material respects they are treated as divine beings.

The cult is seen as providing a link between the largely autonomous Greek cities and their ultimate ruler, avoiding the blatant conflict of force. It is argued finally that this relationship, intertwined with the detailed structure of provincial government, recognized and legitimized the power of the monarch from the Greek viewpoint, as distinct from the actual tools of force, which barely existed in the hellenized provinces of Asia Minor in the shape of two or three provincial cohorts. Price gives short shrift to the few instances of levity towards the Imperial cult - we laugh at what we believe, not what we reject - and he underestimates the length and strength of the historical Cassius Dio's rejection of the Imperial cult, as a Greek-speaking senator of Rome. But altogether Dr Price has breathed new life and a new attitude into what seemed hitherto a lifeless and barren activity.

A choice of blind alleys

Irving Kristol

GHITA IONESCU
Politics and the Pursuit of Happiness:
An enquiry into the involvement of human
nature in the politics of industrial society
240pp. Longman. £16.50.
0582254941

Ghita Ionescu has been a distinguished teacher of political thought at the University of Manchester, editor of an excellent journal (*Government and Opposition*), and an original political theorist in his own right. True, his theorizing may seem a bit exotic by Anglo-American standards, combining as it does the Continental liberalism of a Salvador de Madariaga, the tragic existentialism of Miguel de Unamuno, and the kind of paternalistic Toryism represented by Sir Ian Gilmour. Still, Professor Ionescu is incapable of writing an uninteresting book, and *Politics and the Pursuit of Happiness* is full of sharp insights and - what is less common - much good sense about human nature in politics.

Ionescu's critique of the "new ideological manner of thinking", by which he means "the sacrifice of the self to public, collective, or historical finalities", is both earnest and cogent. He sees the proximate origins of this mode of thought in the French Revolution, which declared in Article I of the Declaration of the Rights of Man that "the goal of society is human happiness". Its more distant origins are to be found in the emergence of modern science, technology, and commerce, all of which combined to provide humanity with a keen sense of enlarged possibilities as to improvements in the human condition. Too keen a sense, perhaps, because this idea of Progress could, in its more extreme manifestations, lead to the intoxicating vision of a new and unprecedented social order inhabited by a radically transformed humanity. That wonderful vision, in turn, produced social and political activists who exemplify what Michael Polanyi has called "moral inversion" - i.e. morally impassioned action that is utterly disdainful of morality itself. Ionescu quotes T. S. Eliot, whose he speaks of men who

... constantly try to escape
from the darkness outside and within
by dreaming of systems so perfect that
no one will need to be good.

The exercise of such futuristic dreams, which inevitably turn into historical nightmares, Ionescu sees as the major task of political philosophy today.

Ionescu's efforts at countering such ideological politics proceed mainly on the level of

individual psychology. He would like us all to be more aware of "the tragic sense of life", to realize that "happiness" is an interior human property while politics can only deal with external human relations, to be aware that suffering is a precondition of authentic human self-realization, to rediscover the priority of moral law over popular will, to strive for greater "disinterestedness" in our political engagements. It is true that he also envisages a revised set of political arrangements, involving greater participation by the individual in a quasi-corporatist, quasi-syndicalist structure, wherein the major economic and social interests eschew an adversary posture and instead negotiate, tranquilly and reasonably. But one wonders: if the ideological cast of mind eventuates in what he calls a "promissory politics", and if this is the source of our malaise, why should any such new constitutional structure make that much difference?

It may be said that Ionescu's basic problem is that he has permitted his insights as a political philosopher to be unduly influenced by twentieth-century sociology, with its grand and ghostly categories, its sweeping generalizations, which obfuscate more than they enlighten. Is it really the case that "the industrial society is a functional grid on which all functions, even the most modest, are enmeshed in a tight chain of reactions"? One can look at things this way, for purposes of academic research, but that does not mean it is the way they actually are. One can even argue plausibly that the reverse is true - that the industrial societies of today are so stable, despite their internal tensions and conflicts, precisely because their complexity, like the complexity of the human body itself, is capable of delimiting any and all "chain reactions". Similarly with such concepts as "modern men" or "mass society". They are useful journalistic phrases that are harmless when employed casually, but become misleading when reified.

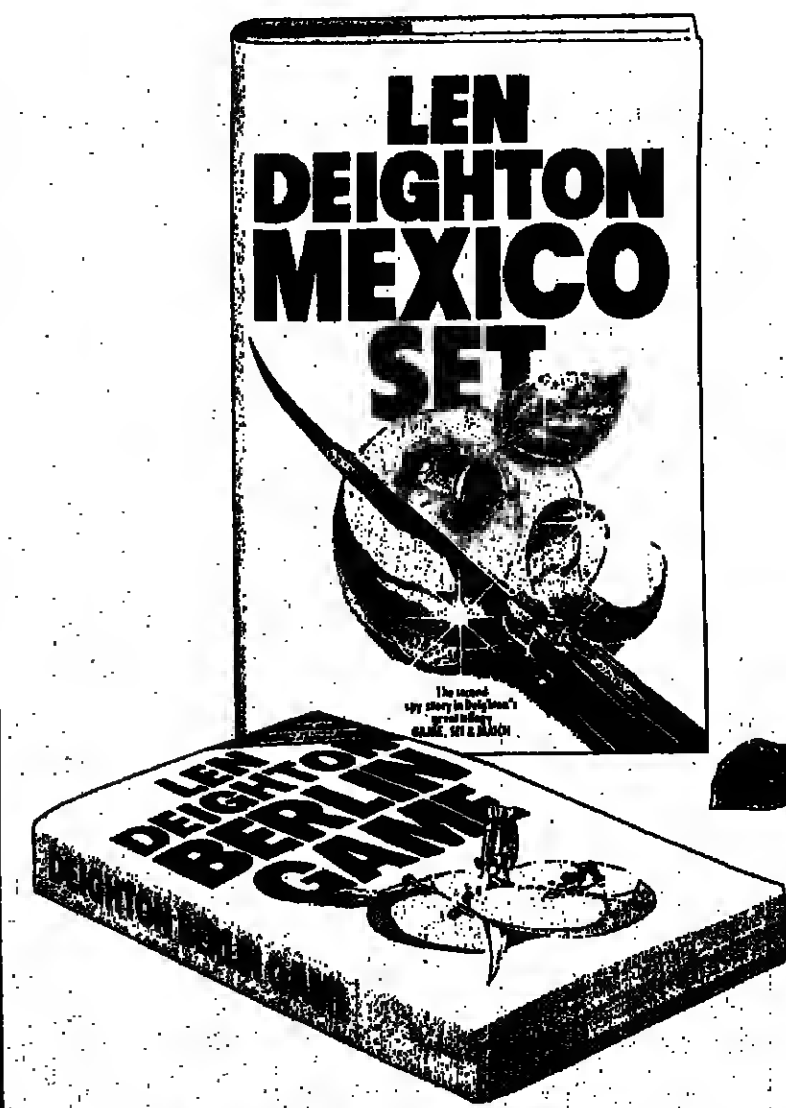
Ionescu is surely correct in asserting that the politics of the past two centuries is "ideological" in a way that previous politics was not. Ours is a future-oriented politics, not one that is content to "tend to the arrangements of society", as Michael Oakeshott would still prefer. It is future-oriented because it cannot be otherwise, given the dynamic thrust provided by economic growth and scientific-technological advances. The ability to cope successfully with change, which is what we expect from politics today, is not at all the same thing as the provision of stability and respect for traditional prerogatives that politics in the past was mainly about. Having said that, however, one has to add that some ideologies are very different

from others, and that we can easily mislead ourselves by emphasizing the similarities rather than the differences.

Ionescu sees the world today as dominated by the conflict between two ideologies. One is Marxist-Leninist messianism, which aims to create that perfect society in which no one has to be good. The other is what he calls utilitarian-liberal, whose promise of happiness is vulgarly materialistic and senselessly hedonistic. Though he clearly would prefer the latter if forced to choose - has in fact preferred the latter when forced to choose - he dislikes both and feels that they are headed towards two alternative blind alleys. His critique of both ideologies, as ideologies, is lucid and convincing. But his conception of a utilitarian-liberal ideology, which he derives in a straight line from Bentham, does less than justice to the way of life which in fact prevails in the Western democracies. Bentham's intellectual influence has indeed been enormous, especially among economists and political scientists, but Benthamite utilitarianism is - thank goodness - not exactly a secular and popular faith that animates the democratic societies of the West, or one that completely dominates its politics.

It is a curious characteristic of the current ideological conflict that, whereas Marxist realities are always so wildly short of Marxist ideals, the democratic-capitalist reality is almost always much nicer and better than our social

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Berlin Game, Granada £1.95 Mexico Set, Hutchinson £8.95

review of the state of the Marxist debate casts a particularly suggestive light on the scrambling for survival only to be witnessed daily inside the Labour Party.

The distance this book stands from some of the more "institutional" guides to Britain's political structure is well exemplified by the chapter on what the authors call "the Secret State". Familiar jargon about the state machine and other such leftist shorthand might seem to portend a sub-Marxist harangue. In fact, importing the closed worlds of the police, the judiciary, the security services and so forth sits well with the authors' objective, and is done with the quizzical scepticism characteristic of most of their book.

The value of their analysis to a student, as well as other interested observers, is that it depicts a political system which is on the move. Too many textbooks are representations of politics-in-asleep, almost as if the authors fear to take account of current realities lest they prove too transient for inclusion between hard covers. As well as their studied - indeed, sometimes tediously laboured - heterodoxy, John Dearlove and Peter Saunders take a wide definition of political reality, encompassing the failed economy as well as the evolving parties, the international constraints (Nato, EEC, IMF) as well as sociological questions such as the structure of the power elite.

As an undocumetary analysis of British politics, broadly defined, this is a useful, provocative introduction.

Hugo Young

JOHN DEARLOVE and PETER SAUNDERS
Introduction to British Politics: Analysing a
capitalist democracy
458pp. Polity Press, 108 Cowley Road,
Oxford, OX4 1JF. £25 (paperback, £8.95).
07456 00115

Most "introductions" to British politics betray an attachment to one dominant political perspective. The commonest of these, rarely acknowledged to amount to a bias, is a version of liberal pluralism which examines the institutions of democracy and explains the workings of power through them alone. The counter-analysis, more explicitly committed, comes in versions of Marxism which describe the political system as a capitalist conspiracy. *Introduction to British Politics* undertakes the difficult task of picking a way between these conventional standpoints; and attempting to describe the operation of power in Britain from the position that neither the Marxist nor the liberal-pluralist explanation is satisfactory.

The book is long, dense, in parts demanding, and rather less elementary than its title might be thought to promise. It examines the co-existence as a living political phenomenon, and looks at the political parties in a world which is rapidly liquidating the comfortable certainties of the two-party model enshrined in the 1945 Robert Mackenzie's classic on the subject. The

John Deighton

Underground compensations

David Bodanis

BARBARA GLOWCZEWSKI and others
La Cité des Cataphiles: Mission anthropologique dans les souterrains de Paris 244pp. Paris: Librairie des Méridiens. 80fr. 285634794

Prise up one of the paving-stones before a certain well-known café in Paris's Left Bank Quarter and a steeply pitched staircase stretches down beneath you. Clamber down that, take a sharp right turn at the bottom where there is a crumbling three-foot-high masonry arch, and you are in the world of underground Paris.

It is largely a forbidden world with entrances blocked, key turnings cemented over, and flying visits from squads of police. But the lure of what it contains—hundreds of kilometres of tunnels, abandoned gypsum mines with bullet holes from the time of the suppression of the Commune, sixteenth-century smugglers' galleries, strange species of mutated mice without eyes, massive waterfalls, a stone-hewn prison prepared by the feared "Cagoule" for their abortive 1937 coup which was to see an attack on Parliament from the basements—the lure of all this and more compels dozens, perhaps hundreds of Parisians, almost every night, and quite illegally, to descend, to investigate, sometimes to meet.

Naturally they have developed their own mythology. Some who go down are never seen again, there's a great feeling of purity and you actually feel younger when you re-emerge, and girls who are atrailed on the surface suddenly reverse all their normal habits and become sexually obsessed. The ordinary Parisians who never venture down have also developed their own stories about these underground wanderers (called "cataphiles"): they desecrate ancient monuments, they engage in wild orgies, they hatch subversive plots.

Cults, trends and stars

Patrick McCarthy

PAUL WEBSTER and NICHOLAS POWELL
Saint-Germain-des-Prés: French post-war culture from Sartre to Bardot 265pp. Constable. £9.95.

Saint-Germain-des-Prés is an extravagantly silly book which supposedly deals with French intellectual and political history from 1940 to 1960 but is in fact a series of anecdotes about Sartre and Sagan, Bardot and Mitterrand. There is no need to distinguish among such figures because they all qualify as celebrities and the authors hold that culture is a matter of "opinion-makers, cult figures, trendsetters" and "stars". Any detail about such gods is inevitably fascinating and thus we are told that at the Liberation Simone Signoret wore a tartan blanket while Elso Triolet preferred Dior and Juliette Gréco Balmain. One of these authors writes for the *Guardian* but the book, alas, reads more like a Peter Simple parody of the *Guardian*.

The reviewer can do no better than quote some of the insights we are offered: *L'Être et le néant* is "largely a development of the existential theories of the pro-Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger"; structuralism is "a philosophy which seemed intent on belittling and demystifying mankind"; *Le Souffleur de verre* displays Claudel's "Catholic righteousness", whereas *Les Temps modernes* is full of "obscure Marxist clichés"; demand for "personal choice of lifestyle" led indirectly to the creation of the "Aburdist Theatre" of Eugène Ionesco and Samuel Beckett. Aragon, we are told, was "bizarre", albeit less so than Drieu; Malraux served de Gaulle with "physical fanaticism", although two pages later we discover him seeking "alternative solutions to sterile extremes". Meanwhile, Gide, "and other literary pacemakers" had founded the *NRF* in 1911.

Despite the mistake in the date the facts in this book are mostly correct. What is lacking is any understanding or real interest in French writing and politics. Post-war history is reduced to a battle, waged in the "sexual Free Zone of Saint-Germain" between youth culture and "the old-fashioned conventional

In the land of Barthes and Lévi-Strauss this is too good to let pass. Are not some of the cataphiles' stories strongly like those of certain Australian aborigines, who also have heroes who descend in the womb of mother Earth, experience extraordinary adventures, and emerge purified and new? Does not all this imagery of the deep and the underlying suggest that the notions they come up with do underlie the myths common in the city above? Isn't the respectable Parisians' fear of the cataphiles a sign that they are on to something normally kept hidden? And above all, why are there so many more cataphiles these days than before?

First, there is the connection with Parisian attitudes towards the suburbs. Subterranean Paris is literally linked with the suburbs in that the two form a continuous space surrounding the city, be it underneath or round the edges. And Parisians do not like their suburbs. As interview after interview reported here makes clear, it is not just the distance or lack of buses, but rather that "La banlieue n'est ni une limite, ni un espace que l'on pourrait précisément circonscrire: c'est un creux, une attente de définition, un entre-deux." This gives subterranean Paris an important role. The cataphiles tend to be young students or respectable working class, only just able to keep up with Parisians and live with the constant threat of being forced out to the terrible suburbs. For them "le souterrain permet d'exorciser la peur du suburbain: l'intention est typiquement magique". For more respectable Parisians, who do not venture down, the cataphiles are a reminder of the brooding, nearby suburbs, and now and then the authorities inject high-pressure concrete to fill the cavities.

Then, there is more than just a specifically Parisian insecurity at work here. In the past few years, and despite scientific evidence to the contrary, Western governments have been assuring us, that shelters can be built under-

ground to allow us to escape the effects of a nuclear war. Such notions of an underground "womb" are widespread, and one of their attractions is that we expect this subterranean life to be led by precise new rules whereby, in particular, the misfits of surface life are automatically accepted. Popular fictions of subterranean existence always start from this, as numerous works the present authors cite demonstrate.

But shelters have their pessimistic aspects too. The shelter fantasist insists on going down, into something like a small bubble or space-ship, an impulse, so the authors suggest, which the cataphiles can help to explain: "L'insécurité, qui nous pousse à fuir chaque trappe

urhaïne menaçant de nous emprisonner, est justement inhérente à la notion même d'abri-microcosme."

Be that as it may, and there is something very arbitrary about the authors' analysis of the phenomenon, ordinary Parisians are so upset by the cataphiles' poking around in the foundations of the city that after the most recent bout of publicity about their doings the mayor, Jacques Chirac, was supported when he called out the concrete-sprayers once again. This time it was to block up not just a few of the most used junctions, but every one of the ill-lit entrances. If the work continues for much longer, the probing journeys of the cataphiles will be at an end, and this book their epitaph.



Dinner at the Grand Hôtel, Paris. Cartoon by Sem, reproduced from the book reviewed below.

Heights of luxury

E. S. Turner

JEAN D'ORMESSON (Editor)
Grand Hôtel: The golden age of palace hotels An architectural and social history 272pp, with 470 photographs, 236 in full colour. Dent. £25. 0460 046675

The Franco-British team who compiled this glossy celebration of the orgulous were not to know of the fame awaiting the Grand Hôtel, Brighton. All they say about this building is that it became overshadowed by the adjacent Metropole. For a glimpse of shattered splendour one must turn to the picture of the Grand at Scarborough, as peppered by the Kaiser's warships.

The book concentrates on the splendours of the *Belle Époque*, when baronial interiors of hotels were matched by those of the great liners. Many of the first-league establishments have come books all to themselves. In fiction, the *Grand Luxe* background attracted Arnold Bennett, who denied that his Imperial Hotel was the Savoy; Vicki Baum, whose *Grand Hotel* owed much to the vanished Adlon, in Berlin; and the witty Ludwig Bemelmans, who located his Hotel Splendid in New York.

As if to match an overblown age, the French contributions to this volume occasionally go over the top. To Jean d'Ormesson, of the Académie Française, the "all-powerful" condescend of a great hotel was "a veritable figure out of Greek tragedy, the man with the golden keys (who was) no stranger to the darkest recesses of anyone's heart..." and so on. To Frédéric Grandel, the coochee was "a kind of political force", who would free a guest arrested "for having knocked down three pedestrians with his Jaguar", or "persuade the medical authorities to forget certain requirements in order to protect the life of one or more individuals" (whatever that means) and find false papers to speed the departure of a guest in danger. When not doing those things, presumably he ruited up theatre tickets.

A *maitre d'hôtel* like the monocled Olivier Dabecot of the Paris Ritz (Proust's home from home) was pure Bemelmans. Apparently he was ready to ensure that guests got live rabbits and pigeons to feed their exotic pets. According to Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd, he once served up elephant's feet in response to a challenge by a "whimsical American", a zoo elephant having been slaughtered for the purpose.

"It does not hurt a Grand Hôtel to have been the scene of a scandal", says Jean d'Ormesson. Mata Hari brought no ill-repute on the *Plex Athénée* in Paris by being arrested in the bar. In the Paris Ritz the Countess of Warwick and Frank Harris plotted to blackmail Edward VII over the "dearest Daisy" letters. Nor (per Brightoo) is a dash of tragedy always unwelcome. It was to Geneva's Beau Rivage that "they brought Franz-Joseph's wife like a great wounded swallow", with an anarchist's bullet wound in her heart. That other Beau Rivage, at Lausanne, has earned perennial headlines as a seat of "lake-side diplomacy" (staging Lebnou talks this year).

It is no reflection on David Watkins's succinct, knowledgeable account of the rise in grand hotels, and their architectural fashions, to say that this is primarily a picture book. Between the dazzling colour-plates there are perhaps too many shots of empty interiors. People do furnish a room! But the pleasures for the eye are many, even though hunting up captions several pages away can be tiresome.

There is an arresting picture of a vast, heavily ornamented hotel rushed up, by a firm of system building, in 1888 for the Barcelona Exhibition, which the British Army picked up as freely as it did the Cecel in London, with 1,029 bedrooms; but at least it vanished quickly—in sixteen weeks!

Those who assisted in the fall of Hitler will take pleasure in recognizing the palace hotels which the British Army picked up as freely as it did the Cecel in London, with 1,029 bedrooms; but at least it vanished quickly—in sixteen weeks!

Some grand hotels have ended up in people's republics, like the now-moist Pupp at Carlsbad (Karlov Vary), once served by the *Prinzess Caroline* Express from Vienna. A glimpse of the Metropole, Moscow, prompts the thought that its coochees, under the present régime, perform no spectacular services. The three insouciant page-boys of the Pera Palace in Istanbul are a reminder that, not long ago, this drop-in-for visitors was not too proud to receive week-enders on ultra-cheap *petit* flights out of *Ortaköy*.

A cartoon illustrates a one-time agent of grand hotels which the contributors agreed to write about the departing guest faced by a double file of staff with bands blaring, only to be cleaned up for inspection and description.

Rules and regularities

Alan Ryan

ROBERT BROWN
The Nature of Social Laws: Machiavelli to Mill 270pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50. 0521257824

Robert Brown is well known to readers interested in the philosophy of the social sciences; twenty years ago, his *Explanation in Social Science* set high standards of clarity and good sense in a rather messy discipline. *The Nature of Social Laws* is intended less as a contribution to the current debate about naturalistic and anti-naturalistic views of social science than as a contribution to the archaeology of the dispute. Though Professor Brown has some persuasive things to say about the claims of naturalists and anti-naturalists at the very end of the book, his subject is the history of the attempt to articulate "the idea that there are scientific laws of society just as there are scientific laws of nature". That history starts with Machiavelli and ends with Mill, because "the work of each man forms a natural boundary". Before Machiavelli there was hardly any discussion of the *de facto* operation of governments, and of the principles which governed them in fact rather than in moral ideal; after Mill, there was no further conceptual or logical development which could shed light on the conflict between naturalists and anti-naturalists.

Mill was the first person to bring the Enlightenment conception of the social sciences to a point sufficient for us fully to understand and appraise it. Subsequent elaboration has added nothing essential to his argument and removed nothing that makes a substantial difference. No one who either favours or opposes the basic claim—the claim that there are social laws just as there are physical laws, and that therefore the structure, procedure, and aims of the social sciences must resemble those of the physical sciences—is likely to have his opinion altered by conceptual developments after Mill.

Students of Popper on the one side, or of Wittgenstein or Gadamer on the other, may well twitch a bit at this claim; but on reflection even they will probably admit its justice. After Mill, philosophers may well have produced better (as well as worse) arguments for supposing that social phenomena were, or were not, simply another part of the natural order to be explained by the same kind of laws as any part of the natural order; but it was Mill who so to speak stabilized the question sufficiently for all sides to know what they were quarrelling about. To agree with Brown on this point it is not necessary to believe that Mill's defence of the naturalistic position was in all respects lucid, coherent, and persuasive. Indeed, when Brown disentangles the various elements of Mill's account of just what the laws were, to whose discovery the social sciences were committed, one feels a familiar sinking feeling, as it emerges ever more plainly that Mill kept making all sorts of distinctions between different kinds of social laws, almost all of which were well worth making, but very few of which coincided exactly with his official position on the nature of social science. Which laws are really causal; which are really laws of nature; which are really ultimate; and all this, a small matter in comparison with the instability of his account of the sciences in which the laws of political economy, say, can be characterized as "abstractions".

To say that Brown's account is a contribution to the archaeology of the argument between those who think that the "Geisteswissenschaften" and the "Naturwissenschaften" are or are not methodologically at one or perhaps misrepresents his own conception of his task. For this is undeniably a piece of analytical philosophy, in which the author's own purposes are analytical rather than historical. Brown's view is that the historian's task is the tracing of influences, both the influence of thinkers upon their successors and the influence of the social, economic and political setting upon contemporary thinkers. Before this task can get very far, however, we need to have a tolerably clear idea of what the ideas are whose genesis we are trying to explain. His task, as he sees it here, is a preliminary clarification. But perhaps it is a misrepresentation to term it an archaeological one. It is historical, for it is a process of disentangling ideas from their surroundings, getting them cleaned up for inspection and description.

Because the first of the social sciences to become self-conscious was political economy, much of *The Nature of Social Laws* is devoted to the early history of economic theory; the stalking horse here is Joseph Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis*, a wonderful book which uniquely combines generosity to precursors with complete contempt for the benighted multitude who entertain a different conception of what economics is about. So Schumpeter was forever prising sixteenth and seventeenth-century social theorists for producing portions (admittedly cluttered by essentials) of the great truths of nineteenth-century economic theory. Brown doesn't exactly deny the similarities between earlier and later views; what he does make the point that sixteenth and seventeenth-century writers simply do not treat their generalizations like the falsifiable hypotheses beloved of the "hypothetico-deductive" conception of science. Thus Botero, praised by Schumpeter for producing the "Malthusian" theory of population as early as 1589, certainly takes into account the factors that limit population, so that the innate propensity to indefinite expansion does not result in the entire globe being almost immediately over-populated. What he does not do is take an interest in the status of his opening assumption that, but for checks, population would increase explosively. Rightly, Brown points out that not just Botero but political writers like Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Bodin treat counter-examples to their generalizations, not as falsifying instances, but as occasions for sharpening up the scope of their prudential maxims—like the driving instructor who tells his pupil that the injunction to accelerate and brake decisively must be applied with caution when approaching damp pedestrian crossings.

Once we get on to Locke, Mandeville, Hume and Smith, we enter territory where methodological self-consciousness is the order of the day. Even here, however, such innovations as Mandeville's devastating use of the doctrine of unintended consequences—as in his demonstration that the chastity of ladies in polite society was preserved by the immorality of their sisters who sold sexual gratification on the street, and thereby reduced the force of the carnal pressures which would otherwise have impelled upper-class men to seduce upper-class ladies—do not lead to a systematic inquiry into the nature of the social system that displays such curious properties. What look like candidates for laws are still treated as prudential maxims which legislators ought to take into account. Someone who felt less committed to a broadly empiricist account of the nature of science might, here, feel that Brown overdoes the differences between the natural scientist and the social theorist. It's true that Newton became a legend, and that "the experimental method of reasoning" was an object of emulation. But not all sciences showed any great tendency to turn into axiomatized or quantified systems before the middle of the nineteenth century, and it might even be thought that the uncertain logical status of many generalizations was—pace Popper—a fruitful rather than a retrograde feature. This may be generally true of economics, a discipline whose "laws" have always hovered uncertainly between the empirical and the *a priori*.

Although, as I have suggested, Mill's views remain to some obscurity even after Brown's patient disentangling, the effect of this book is to increase one's sense of Mill's standing in the subject. His "canons of induction" may not have provided a royal road to the discovery of true causal laws of social and economic life, but his concern to spell out just what we can and cannot hope to explain stands up well to any attempt of scrutiny. He was perfectly clear about the difference between merely extrapolating from trends and being able to adduce genuine laws in explanation; he was mostly clear about the limitations on appeals to "human nature", even if he was not entirely clear about just what "Ethology, or the Science of the Formation of Character" would achieve. He was deft at distinguishing the situation where we possessed a genuine law but could not apply it for lack of information about the situation from the case where we knew what the situation was but did not know which causal laws to apply; he was amenable to the thought that we might have genuine explanations even

where we possessed only probabilistic laws. What Mill was not successful in was the production of strict laws of a distinctively social nature; and what he was most misled by was his belief that the growth of ideas was the chief causal factor in determining social change—an area in which, as Brown shows well enough, Mill was slow to see that in many cases changes in social practice are the very same thing with changes in thought. "Galileo's first use of his telescope was in itself a display of thought on the subject, not the mere effect of his earlier thought."

Brown's conclusion is not dispirited or dispiriting, however. On the main issue between the humanists who look for social meanings, or insist on the "rule-governed" character of social life, and the naturalists who look for causes and regularities, he is evidently on the naturalists' side. There are altogether too many occasions when an appeal to rules gets us nowhere—when rules are broken, when we want to explain the origins of rules, when we want to explain non-rule-governed behaviour. All the same, there is no doubt that strict laws of the kind Mill sought have simply not turned up. It

Raking it in

Isabel Emmett

GIANFRANCO POGGI
Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit: Max Weber's Protestant Ethic 121pp. Macmillan. £10. 0333 345045

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Max Weber argued that the moral code fashioned out of Calvin's doctrines by Calvinists led to a new attitude towards money-making and work among European and American businessmen. He called that code the Protestant Ethic and the new attitude the Spirit of Capitalism, and argued that both were necessary conditions for the birth of modern capitalism.

The fact that ideas influence economic developments is self-evident, as Marx had recognized. He believed that the development of productive forces played a crucial role in social change and that this entailed people forming new ideas. He believed also that the ideas which social groups came to form about their own interests and those of other groups played a crucial part likewise in producing change. Some Marxists, however, talked as though ideas did not matter in history. Weber's argument was developed in part as an answer to them. But he also wanted to show what strange adventures occur to sets of ideas over time, often to the distress of those who hold them. In his analysis Weber separates certain ideas from the total flux of thinking, doing and being that is human history and came, usefully but somewhat dangerously, to write of them as though they had been something like independent actors.

Weber's argument is not really provable or is it very plausible—we can never know what other events or sets of ideas might not have played a similar role if the Protestant Ethic had been absent. Even had Weber been able to prove that the Ethic was a necessary condition for the birth of modern capitalism, he would not have been saying as much about the matter as is commonly thought. Among the myriad causes of such an event the contribution of any one may be relatively small and in the case in question other factors, including other ideas, are likely to have been more influential.

One of the virtues of Gianfranco Poggi's book is that he understands this. He shows that Weber was aware of multi-causality and aware of most of the conditions other than religious ideas necessary for the appearance of modern capitalism. In his final chapter he places the Protestant Ethic argument in a wider context which he finds scattered throughout Weber's work.

He argues that Weber misses out a term to his title. Calvin's own doctrine are term 1; the Protestant Ethic is term 2; and the spirit of capitalism term 3 (term 4, capitalism, is only implied). Most Calvinists were not businessmen and the Calvinist "spirit" was the novel attitude to work and money-making of certain

is implausible to suppose that this is because social scientists have chronically been more obtuse than natural scientists. The better explanation is simply that the common-sense vocabulary in which we describe and live our social existences is not one in terms of which laws are to be had:

We cannot, on the one hand, phrase our questions in terms of our daily social issues and, on the other hand, hope to discover reliable and precise social laws that we can apply to them. We cannot hope to do this any more than we can hope to find genuine laws in physics by restricting ourselves to queries such as "In our climate, how much less maintenance, on the average, will a tile roof need than one made of wooden shingles?"

But since most explanation in social science operates by appealing to agents' intentions, to the impact of natural and non-social causes on social phenomena, and to loose generalizations and weak correlations with other social events, the probable non-existence of strict laws which are genuinely law-like and distinctively social in nature turns out to have less practical importance than writers like Mill ever realized. In that sense, the debate can, as Professor Brown says, "safely be laid to rest".

Calvinist businessmen. At this point Poggi might have corrected the blurring we find in Weber between the effect of one Protestant code on businessmen in the mid-seventeenth century and that of a different Protestant code on industrial workers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but fails to do so. He criticizes the way in which Weber portrays the Ethic and the "spirit" as ideas floating above their presumed possessors, in the hope that the affinities between the two sets of ideas will somehow demonstrate a causal connection.

Having clarified the terms in Weber's argument Poggi reduces them, arguing that the capitalist "spirit" supposedly "fathered by" the Protestant Ethic is nothing more than that ethic applied to money-making. Weber's analytical distinction is hardly worth making. Poggi makes a good case but it might work better still if that part of the "spirit" which regards continuous effort to accumulate wealth as a virtue were collapsed back into the Ethic, and the rest—the fact of continuous competitive accumulation of wealth; the treatment of time as currency; the self-discipline—seen as part of a description of modern capitalism in its early stages, rather than as a cause of it.

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John Coward

The anarchists' advocate

Lewis L. Gould

PAULAVRICH
The Haymarket Tragedy
535pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£32.10.
069104711

The Haymarket bombing of May 4, 1886, in Chicago is one of the most controversial incidents in the history of American labour unrest and left-wing protest. Eight policemen died either from the bomb or the shooting that erupted. In all, sixty-seven officers and an unknown number of citizens were injured. In the mid-1930s Henry David's *The History of the Haymarket Affair* (1936) demonstrated that the eight anarchists who were tried and convicted as instigators of a conspiracy that led to the bombing were not guilty. David showed the bias of the trial judge, Joseph E. Gary, the climate of anti-radical hysteria in Chicago, and the weaknesses of the prosecution's case against Albert Parsons, August Spies, and their six co-defendants. "The evidence never proved their guilt", David concluded. Four of the men were hanged, another committed suicide before execution, and three went to prison until Governor John P. Altgeld pardoned them in 1893.

For all of his analytic insights, David did not have access to many relevant primary sources, and he did not go deeply into the personal histories of the anarchist defendants. Paul Avrich, a specialist in Russian and American anarchism, has drawn on new material, including the papers of some of the participants. He devotes more than a third of his narrative to the events that preceded Haymarket, and provides a detailed recounting of the inside workings of the Chicago anarchist movement. This fresh information is the most important contribution that *The Haymarket Tragedy* makes to historical understanding of the case. Avrich has not endeavoured to trace the complexities of the Haymarket episode for late nineteenth-century American society. Instead, this is a brief for the defence, that stresses advocacy over analysis.

Avrich does address a number of specific questions about the case – the civilian casualties at Haymarket, the whereabouts of Albert Parsons after the bombing, and the suicide of Louis Lingg. He also believes that he has probably solved the still open question of the identity of the bomb-thrower, George Schwab, an anarchist shoemaker, allegedly passed through Chicago from New York, hurled the explosive, and then fled to California. David rejected the story of George Schwab's involvement, and Avrich admits that "the evidence is far from satisfactory".

On the facts of the trial itself, the legal appeals, and Governor Altgeld's pardon, *The Haymarket Tragedy* supplements David's work but does not replace it. Avrich writes as a partisan of the anarchists, convinced that no one on the prosecution side could honestly have believed in their guilt. Only political ambition, allegiance to capitalism, or moral cowardice can explain sympathy for the state's case. This sustained indignation gives the book power, but leaves relevant questions unanswered. Why was Judge Gary, whom the defence believed would be fair, so flagrant a partisan on the bench? Why was State's Attorney Julius S. Grinnell so unrelenting in public against the defendants? The change of heart that led one-time enemies of the anarchists, such as grand jury member E.S. Dreyer or newspaper editor Melville E. Stone, to become supporters also goes unexplained. Avrich does not examine the world of Judge Gary, Attorney Grinnell, the Chicago police, and the city's upper classes with as much perception as he brings to his heroes and their families.

In many passages, moreover, this Gilded Age legal struggle becomes almost a stock melodrama of the period with the forces of virtue and evil arrayed against each other. August Spies, the author says, "was also strikingly handsome and inspired confidence by his forthright manner". Albert Parsons had a "slender physique, intelligent face, and neat appearance". On the side of the prosecution, Assistant State Attorney Edmund F. Hanigan "was a thick-set man of about thirty-five with coarse features; a sinister expression, and a hoarse voice". And Police Captain Michael J.

Schaack was "corpulent, pompous, and inordinately vain". The intensity of Avrich's personal commitment to the defendants pervades the narrative and drains some of the climactic events, especially the executions and funerals of November, 1887, of their drama and impact.

The picture of Chicago in the 1880s is equally stark and lurid. Oppressed workers, corrupt police, ruthless bosses, and a frightened middle class provided a fertile ground, Avrich believes, for anarchist doctrines. Yet he acknowledges that labour was divided in its opinions toward the defendants and was generally unsympathetic to their creed. The small size of the anarchist following, even at the height of the labour agitation in the 1880s, needed further emphasis. Some indication of the ethnic complexity of the Chicago electorate at this time would have given a more realistic picture of the difficult situation the anarchists faced as a political and economic force.

Avrich shares the corrosive and apocalyptic vision that the anarchists held of American capitalism and its future at the end of the nineteenth century. Haymarket indeed represented a stain on the nation's system of justice, and the prosecution and executions of the accused have no defenders now. But the period 1890 to 1920 saw in the United States a burst of reform agitation that began the slow process of mitigating the excesses of industrial development. The Haymarket case, with all its tragic injustices and unfortunate consequences, was among the events – the Homestead Strike, the Pullman Strike, and the Depression of the 1890s generally – that led Americans in the later years of the Gilded Age to re-examine their national values and initiate a generation of political and economic reform. The Progressive Era did not move in a direction that the Chicago anarchists, or perhaps Paul Avrich, would have endorsed, but their fate was a part of the troubled early signs of that sweeping movement for social change.

Avrich's book is useful for its research and its command of American anarchism. The Chicago defendants have found an eloquent advocate. As an event in American history, however, the Haymarket case still awaits its definitive treatment.

The planters' power

Peter Marshall

BETTY WOOD
Slavery in Colonial Georgia 1730-1775
254pp. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
\$22.50.
08203 0687 8

The settlement of Georgia was the last colonial success story of the First British Empire, but its creation, as Betty Wood is at pains to demonstrate, was neither speedy nor straightforward. The nature and form of the society which was envisaged in 1732 by the Trustees then granted the founding charter, differed profoundly from that existing on the eve of the Revolution forty years later. The transformation, if it has to be ascribed to a single factor, can be traced to the growth of slave labour. By 1775 Georgia was well on the way to becoming what its progenitors had sought to render impossible: a society whose politics and economics were dominated by slave-planter interests.

The extent of the change can be exaggerated. The Trustees were not abolitionists and their rejection of slavery was based on practical, rather than moral, considerations. If there were to prevail, their efficacy had to be demonstrated. As it was, the attraction of settlement in the colony to free whites did not become sufficiently apparent, while the prospect of securing land suitable for slave cultivation, particularly of rice, was much more evident and appealing to planters unable to expand their South Carolina and West Indian estates. Their ability to provide capital, expertise and the slaves essential to plantation production overshadowed the Trustees' purposes after 1750 and completely obscured them after 1763. Slaves and the means needed to perpetuate their condition grew steadily in importance. This is the process carefully and lucidly portrayed by Dr Wood.

The pioneers' piety

Kenneth O. Morgan

ELWYN T. ASHTON
The Welsh in the United States
182pp. Calsda House, 23 Coleridge Street, Hove, Sussex. £6.50.
0950 968609

The causes, character and consequences of Welsh emigration, particularly to the United States, have inspired much fine scholarship, both from Welsh and American historians. David Williams, Alan Conway and Glynor Williams in Wales, Rowland Berthoff, Wilbur Shepperson and Edword Hartman among American scholars have examined the precise impact made by Welsh emigrants upon the social, economic and religious life of the United States from the seventeenth century to the twentieth; while Gwyn A. Williams has written marvellous accounts of the inspiring magic of the Madoc legend and its influence on specific Welsh-American settlements such as Beulah, Pennsylvania. We have also had recently welcome reprints of the writings of Benjamin Chidlaw and R. D. Thomas ("Iorthyn Gwynedd"), both of them hot-gossiping missionaries touting the cause of mass Welsh migration to the opportunities and freedom of the New World. Thomas's Welsh-language guide, *Yr Ymfudwr* (The Emigrant), became a best-seller in the 1850s, and by 1890 there were 100,000 Welsh-born immigrants recorded in the United States national census.

As a result of this active scholarship, the contribution of the Welsh to American civilization can be traced with new precision. They were prominent among the older immigrant stock, as skilled miners from Pennsylvania to the Rockies, and as farmers from New York to Minnesota. They were also early pioneers in American labour unionism. In addition, the Welsh influence upon several aspects of American religious history was a remarkable one, mainly in older Protestant settlements, in New England and the north-east, but also in meso-scale novelties such as the Mormons. Several hundred Welsh "Saints" followed their compatriot, "Captain" Dan Jones, to Utah in the

late 1840s. Not until the massive upsurge of new immigration from the peasant societies of southern and eastern Europe from the 1880s onwards did the Welsh-American immigrants become swamped, and their cultural life increasingly attenuated. Thereafter, no immigrant group became more rapidly assimilated to the mores of the New World. No national group at the turn of the century had a higher proportion of fully naturalized Americans.

It would be pleasant to record that these historical themes are illuminated by Elwyn T. Ashton's new book. Unfortunately, with its dutiful listing of Welsh place-names and Welsh-American celebrities (including such dubious inclusions as the novelist William Deni Howells), it takes us back to a much older tradition of filio-pietistic eulogy. At least we are spared the alleged eighteen Welsh signatories of the Declaration of Independence or the Welsh roots of Jefferson, or Lincoln; but otherwise sentiment and nostalgia tend to predominate. At the same time, this unpretentious and attractive little book contains much to charm and inform the general reader, not only in Wales itself. It gives us competent accounts of early Welsh religious communities in Pennsylvania and the Midwest, and documents, briefly but generally accurately, patterns of agricultural and industrial emigration in the nineteenth century. Its biographical notes rescue from oblivion some genuine Welsh-Americans such as Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones, the distinguished reformer mayor of Toledo, Ohio, in the 1850s. There are some jolly stories such as that of January Jones, a Welsh mining prospector in the California gold rush of 1849. One January he threw his hat into the air and struck the earth where it landed. He literally struck lucky, discovered gold on the spot and became immensely wealthy. There is also some picturesque detail on current Welsh-American literary and musical life, including the recent Welsh newspaper, *Ninnau* (We Too) published in New Jersey. Mr Ashton's work will not set the valleys ablaze but it will remind distant observers of the American scene that, huddling impatiently in the great melting pot, was an important element that remained obstinately and incorrigibly Welsh.

Arresting historical descriptions of a pioneering stage rely heavily on the involvement of exceptional characters and the preservation of their records or events. In the case of Georgia, only the small but articulate band of Salzburg settlers supplied, following their arrival in 1734, a substantial, if atypical, first-hand commentary on the difficulties of creating a new community. The growth of slavery and the legal and economic systems which confirmed and nourished the institution cannot be documented in precise detail from the surviving body of materials; planters' papers are scattered and slave narratives do not exist. To narrow the gap, the author has drawn, in a resourceful fashion, on such evidence as is available. Inevitably, however, the conclusions which can be reached from analyses of changes and extensions in the body of law devised to control the slaves, and of details included in advertisements seeking the recapture of escaped blacks, appearing in the *Georgia Gazette*, are somewhat general in nature. Interpretations may vary: the passage of new laws requiring increasingly harsh penalties for

infraction might, for example, be judged either to indicate mounting white alarm or to reflect the growing difficulty of regulating slave life, particularly in Savannah, the colony's only town. Since it is evident that by the eve of the Revolution slavery in Georgia had become steadily more akin in style to that practised in neighbouring colonies, there seems little point in seeking to assess the mildness or severity of its enforcement. Borrowing some quite remarkable accession of materials, any future judgement on the subject will depend upon the sources located and used by Betty Wood. A certain inherent ambiguity may allow other explanations to be offered: Georgia was too recent a society to acquire both slave interests and moral doubts, but was also too early a settlement to form a mere part of the relentless nineteenth-century expansion of the Cotton Kingdom. Its slavery developed as a fact of economic life requiring practical and local social restraints, and it is this system, lacking drama and resistant to intellectual forms of explanation, that Dr Wood has depicted so well.

The tribe's title

Gordon Brotherston

PETER JOHN POWELL
People of the Sacred Mountain: A history of the Northern Cheyenne chiefs and warrior societies 1830-1879, with an epilogue 1969-1974
Two Vols. 1441pp Harper and Row, £25.
0 06 451351 8

Superbly produced, these two volumes are not just another history of the Cheyenne. They record that history in the words and phrases, legends of the Cheyenne themselves, and amount to a title to Sacred Mountain, Northern Cheyenne history, written on their

voice, and the traditional lands they occupy only part of today, within the United States. Reading their meticulous and detailed accounts we are given another perspective on the expansion of the United States and the practices of the invading white or "spider-whites". And beyond this we find another way of experiencing time and events which has much to do with a native American philosophy that extends far beyond the boundaries of the Cheyenne. The footnotes and scholarly apparatus are impeccable, so that as a whole the volumes serve both as a monument to the leaders of the Cheyenne in the nineteenth century and as a political charter for their descendants today.

Critical reflections

Iain McGilchrist

CHRISTOPHER RICKS
The Force of Poetry
447pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £19.50.
019 811722 1

Essays are tentative: the word itself tells us that. "Toute cette écaillée que je barbouille ici..." There is nothing about Montaigne's wonderful description of his own book of essays; he is aware of its vulnerability, and he is easy about it, as the essays, improvised and unfinished, are themselves the apocryphal expressions of ease. For all that, there is nothing tentative, or spacious, or easy-going about the essays here collected by Christopher Ricks to form a new book, suitably entitled *The Force of Poetry*. As ever Professor Ricks is lively, elegant and combative – "the eagle eye in the velvet glove" to renovate a cliché or two, *à la* Empson; and so when he self-deprecatingly classes himself, with John Aubrey, among the "maggoty-headed credulous fellows", we may be forgiven if we do not altogether believe him. "A gathering of essays, not a marb of chapters", as Ricks puts it with a little touch of poetry which is destined to linger in the mind and grow in suggestiveness as one reads, this book covers exactly twenty years and contains nearly as many essays, all but one of which have appeared in print before. Their subjects are: Gower, Marvell, Milton, Johnson, Wordsworth (twice), Beddoes, Housman, Empson, Stevie Smith, Lowell, Larkin, Geoffrey Hill (twice), clichés, puns on the word "lie", misquotations (largely about Arnold and Pater – this first appeared in the *TLS* in 1977), and American English.

Ricks is now by general consent one of the foremost critics writing in England, and certainly one of the hardest to ignore. A vivid style, a familiarity (to which the annotated Tenyson is a monument) with an enormous range of English literature and a tendency to see a world in an amperand; as scholar, litterateur or journalist, he is never dull and often richly suggestive. This example from the first essay, on Gower, illustrates the best in Ricks's style, his celebrated sensitivity to verbal detail. He quotes a passage from the tale of Midas:

And forth put it in assal
With all the haste that he mal,
He toucheth that, he toucheth this,
And in his hand al gold it is,
The Ston, the Tree, the Lef, the gras,
The flour, the fruit, al gold it was.

Ricks comments: "How obviously the gratification of 'al gold it is' hardens into the ominous 'al gold it was'." It is nicely observed, in both senses. As in so many other cases, one wonders if the effect is not an invention of Ricks's; but if it is, it is a happy one, and, unless it can be shown to be an invention, adds to the pleasure we take in reading Gower. And the corollary is that if Ricks had not made the point, no one else would. For this reason we are happy to have his reflections – a word with a Ricksian aptness – on anything he may care to touch: Midas-like, al gold it will be.

Like the man said, gratifying; than ominous. This little self-referential game whereby the author's own words are made to apply to himself is one of which Ricks is particularly fond. It has its uses, of course, especially in reviews. But in the normal way of things it needs to be used sparingly. Ricks can hardly quote anyone or anything without it; and as he puts himself forward, his authors' rattle, with the golden handshake of a few of their own words received gratefully, gilded, back. A small point? Iterated often several times a page, for 400-odd pages, it makes a larger one; and with its ingenuous unfoldings of small points of style, Ricks himself could have found much in it. He surely noticed. For the moment, this one example will have to stand for an unnumbered series. Beddoes describes the "Humble-Bagging" of Rome, socked by a sbe-wolf, and "tumbled oo straw". He concludes

Was folded in a pander.
"The concluding half-line", Ricks remarks, "is both casually tumbled or unfinished and trusted or folded."

The main impression one takes away from reading these essays, apart from the brilliancy of the verbal play, is one of lack of space; and

they are not unrelated impressions. Partly Ricks packs a lot in – he readily repays the reader's attention. But so did C. S. Lewis, a critic Ricks handsomely admires. The closest comparisons among the living are John Bayley and John Carey, both of whom give the reader at least as good measure for their time. The subtle, tactful unfoldings of psychological nuance, the gentle and generous suggestion of possibilities, and the quiet humour of Professor Bayley give the reader the sense of something opening out, living, breathing, growing, free and independent of the critic's band. Reading him is liberating, as is reading Professor Carey. I shall never forget the excitement I felt reading John Bayley's *The Characters of Love*; or Carey's *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art*, as entrancing as any novel – surely one could manage just one more chapter before putting it down. Agree or not – and there is, as the author would wish, room for disagreement in that book – it held a complete vision of the man and his work, vividly conceived. Ricks loves detail, but Carey loves little things: buttons, sponges, coins, his unfolding of their meaning, like Bayley's unfolding of the minutiae of human interactions, leads one easily, willingly, back to the whole. Ricks, by contrast, tends to be importunate: he takes one by the button-hole. The frame of his prose is too tight and cramped for the reader's thoughts, or for any thoughts but Ricks's. Hence it is one less stilled by the relentless puns and involuted word-games, the dolphin twists and turns of the critic's words. In loops, through the hoops, his jests swoop and swirl, turning and turning in the narrowing gyre, always returning to Ricks himself. Self-referential? "The only way to speak of a cliché is with a cliché", says Ricks: perhaps the only way to speak of self-reference is self-referentially.

Why is this phenomenon so important in our time? The history of it goes back as far, at least, as Epimenides, but modern novelists and philosophers such as Barthelme and Hofstadter have made it their cause. Behind them there is a principally French tradition stretching back from Queneau to Mallarmé to Diderot: as the fathering influence on Diderot, Sterne has been added to the list, though as I have argued elsewhere I believe this to be misleading. George Steiner, in an essay, "Eros and Idiom", linked the self-referential nature of much modern literature to a narcissistic flight from reality, which he incidentally associated with the prominence of the homosexual in it. Ricks has always defended literature admirably against this trivializing tendency in postmodernist literature and criticism: he is a champion of the belief that literature is anchored in something outside itself. For all that, he doesn't show us much of that something in his own work. His is an honourable defence of the integrity of words themselves, rather than a desire to relate them to the world from which they came and to which they must return.

A trivial but revealing illustration lies in a footnote, where Ricks traces, with the help of the *OED*, the development of the word *soothe*. "To prove to be true"; "to declare to be true"; "to put forward a lie or untruth as being true"; "to smooth, gloss over, flatter or render calm"; this is the downhill path of the word over a couple of centuries to the modern meaning in around 1700. Ricks calls it "a disarming index of social and cultural change". But is it? Did humanity slide over this period, or did the word? Ricks equates them, but was it not merely the word catching up with time-honoured – or as Ricks might have put it, time-dishonoured – human practice?

Language turned on its self delights in puns. *Double entendre*: it is one of Ricks's readiest weapons. But *entendre*, too, has two meanings, and do we really understand, or merely hear, the double? "I saw him riding over the Desert Sands. With the fleet waters of the drowning world in chase of him. Ricks points out *fleet* (swift) / *flee* (slips), but, as he acknowledges, the pun is irrelevant: it is called up only to be dismissed. But called up by Ricks or by Wordsworth? Ricks would have us note, the *apery* is worthless. So as not to waste note, the *apery* is worthless. Ricks has these disruptive, pointless puns. Ricks has the vented a new category; something he calls the "anti-pun". Its value is debatable. Clearly poets do allow irrelevant connections con-

sistently or unconsciously to guide their choice of words. Lowell must have done so when he gave us "the dogfish barks its nose". Here is Ricks at work:

The lifers file into the hall.
According to their houses – [two
Of laundried denim. On the wall
A coloured fairy tinkles blues
And litters by the balustrade;
Canaries beat their bars and scream.

"For a moment a black homosexual is glimpsed – thanks to 'denim' [why?] and 'blues' – as if 'coloured' meant *coloured*." But the quest for anti-puns seems to me over-anxious and over-ingenious. It calls up obstructive associations which do no good. Think of Tenyson's beautiful poem about evening, and turning again home, and the "one clear call for me" that is to be for him the last call: do we do anyone a service by noting that, despite these suggestions, "crossing the bar" doesn't mean helping oneself to a drink? An absurd instance, undoubtedly, but it is only a matter of degree.

A special problem is raised by the anti-pun that isn't even to be found in the printed text. Where Lowell writes "pin-beaded", Ricks wants to read (and then "fend off") "pin-beaded". Similarly "shadow-bowing" and "shadow-holding". I feel troubled by this. In my copy of Coleridge's poems the page-titles are a little blurred, and for years when looking through that section of the book containing the poem "Fears in Solitude", I have been unable to fend off the misreading "Fears in Solitude". One could set about finding justifications for this reading, and indeed it might have something to be said for it: the laxative idea is con-jured up only to intensify our sense of Coleridge's resolution in the face of fear; the idea of "pairs" in solitude intensifies Coleridge's loneliness by contrast. But I think on the whole that the associations are better done without, and the tendency to branch into misreadings blurs rather than sharpens the impression of the original.

With a circularity that should give Ricks some pleasure, "double entendre" is itself a *double entendre* [Larousse: *double*: "répétition erronée d'un mot, d'une ligne, etc."]. *Double entendre*: a gracious, though mistaken, redoubling of a word? Triply self-referential, this itself sounds close to an anti-pun. Ricks misses no misprints, and it may well be this *double entendre* that he is attempting when we read "they would not be the exactly the same answer". Heaping Pelion upon Ossa, the "the" is itself repeated "exactly the same". The sentence could, if there were space, be punctuated in a variety of ways to bring out all the possible nuances of Ricks's meaning.

Circularity is not only in the words. An effect similar to the anti-pun is achieved by Ricks, for example when he draws our attention to the freedom from prurience in Gower's description of Pygmalion: "And after his arm now hie now there / He leide". "Those very same words could so easily snigger", he says; and once he says this we are condemned to an awareness of the sniggering meaning, and to an attempt to block it out, and to an awareness of our attempt to do so: He helps destroy the

chastity he commends at the moment of commending it: again, the anxiety not to miss an observation better missed.

Puns are disruptive. In Shakespeare they are commonly the means whereby one character subverts the argument of another, silences him and wrests the centre of the stage from him by a retort which leaves his serious-minded opponent at a loss. There is something disruptive about the pun as Ricks's weapon, too, and it sometimes disrupts when it is not used against, but found in, his subject. He quotes, for example, the skating episode from *The Prelude*:

and oftentimes
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks, on either side,
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion

Ricks invites us to "consider" the "self-referring effect" created by this last line. But he moves on without further comment, and we are left trying to guess what such an effect might achieve. And does the line itself move rapidly? Is Wordsworth anyway interested in drawing our attention to the medium of verse at this moment? The premisses seem to me wrong. At this moment of childhood animal vigour nothing could be further from his purpose than to draw us into a linguistic game of any kind. He used "line" here, as elsewhere, because it is the right word for the circumstances, irrespective of its reference to poetry itself. The observation has a sort of ingeniousness, but it puts itself forward at the expense both of the innocence and of the poetic force of Wordsworth's lines. And this is odd in a book called *The Force of Poetry*.

The trouble seems to me that "the coincidence of a turn of phrase . . . potly serves the [critic's] turn". These words are Ricks's, but, in the Ricks tradition, they could easily be applied to himself. Ricks's comment on the resulting complacency, "it puns", depends on a twirling self-reflexiveness in the context – wrenching its body (like Smart's eat Jeffery) seven times round with elegant quickness – but it seems only catty.

With this bent towards the reflexive, Ricks's natural subject is Marvell, master of the "self-folded comparison", the "self-inwoven simile", even of "self-infolded self-division". All the same, this essay seems to me less satisfactory than most of the others, just because it is all so easily turned into a celebration of the self-reflexive. He produces some interesting self-weeping eyes from Proust, and compares them with Marvell's self-weeping tears; but then he quotes Crashaw:

Each Ruby there,
Or Pearl that dare appear,
Be its own blush, be its own Tear

and comments: "there is no haunting interminability, such as exists when we try to imagine a drop of water wept by itself, between a pearl, and its own Tear: instead of Marvell's fluid windows, we are handed something which crystallises as cleverness." But instead of Crashaw, aren't we too being handed "something which crystallises as cleverness"? For Crashaw is not, despite the word "own", engaging in the same game. He is talking about

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John Ashberry

make-up. Anyway Crashaw has his own virtues – his own exuberance, grace and lambency – and comparing him unfavourably with Marvell makes little sense. But it happens again: the lines in "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body" are quoted:

O who shall me deliver whole,
From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?
Which, stretch upright, Impals me so,
That mine own Precipice I go;

Carried away by the fact that the Soul claims to be both what falls and what it falls down, Ricks calls these lines "more frightening, less melodramatic" than Hopkins's "O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall / Frightful, shaggy, no-man-fathomed" or than William Golding's "fierce stroke in Pincher Martin when the rock to which the man clings is felt to be the tooth within his own head". Really more frightening? Something seems awry.

In the course of the article Ricks cites another critic who cites Ricks: "I risk being

suspected of self-infolded or short-circuited self-congratulation". Why does Ricks fear this? Is it because on the next page he puts his finger on the problem which surrounds reflexive word-play? He quotes a punning passage from *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, and remarks: "The pun . . . and the full iambic rounding . . . so plump out the reflexive image as to make it seem that it is not Richard Feverel, about whom those words are penned in a letter, or even Adrian Harley, who pens them, but the author of them, Meredith, who really breathes the air of self-congratulation."

I said earlier that puns take the centre of the stage, and I think this and the other word-play help to create an unintended effect for Ricks, that he is upstaging his authors. Pater gets a fearful pasting from Ricks, partly because his "quasi-creative arrogation misleads him to misquote peccably". (Bad luck that in this piece on the scholarly virtue of accuracy Ricks misspells the name of one of Pater's scholars,

Iain Fletcher.) But when he tells us "Pater demeans his authors by outdoing them, escalating their phrases into his fugitive noosphere", he seems to me rather near an important, self-reflexive, self-criticism (and what could be suspected of more elegantly outdoing Pater than that phrase about "escalating their phrases into his fugitive noosphere"?).

This essay, "Walter Pater, Matthew Arnold and misquotation", focuses another interesting aspect of Ricks's work: the little credence it gives to the role of chance. He assumes, and this is certainly a productive assumption, that nothing in literature got there by chance. A misquotation was done on purpose, whether or not its author knew it. Not only is this productive, but it lies in a venerable tradition, that of Freud's theory of parapraxes. My own view, for what it is worth, is the dull one, that some mistakes are revealing and some aren't. Ricks, as far as I can gather, believes they all are, and discovers Pater's and Arnold's characters from their misquotations. What he says about Pater is ingenious and partly convincing; what he says about Arnold equally ingenious and less so. Perhaps, it may be argued, chance cannot be admitted by the critic, since it brings criticism to an end. Put another way, a proper sense of what is due to chance will tell you where to stop. It is a question always hovering over Ricks's ingenuity, whether he should not have stopped a little while back; and, as all criticism can sometimes be inopportune and disruptive, that question matters.

"This most incalculable of high dives", "that most daunting and exhilarating of all human commitments"; for Ricks the getting of children is clearly not a matter of chance. Having described this often accidental act as such a fearful decision – a fearful decision which, Ricks argues intriguingly, underlies the poetry of Empson – can we believe that Ricks would father anything, even a pun, by accident? Should then Empson be offended when on the next page Ricks describes his poems as sometimes "truly fearful"? In another writer, Ricks would have argued for the double meaning – at least as an anti-pun, present as part of the meaning, though fended off. What should we assume?

"Am I imagining all this, transubstantiating clumsiness to felicity?" This unanswered question deserved an answer, since it lies at the centre of Ricks's work. His opposition to the poetry-means-what-I-make-it school depends on being able to assess what the poet may have had in mind. Very often, as in the Wordsworth passage quoted above, Ricks doesn't tell us what advantage accrues to the piece from an effect he claims to have found in it: he just gives us his observation and leaves it at that. If nothing can be shown to come of it, why should we be interested? But if something is achieved – and in the instance from Aubrey which prompted Ricks's self-questioning, something definitely is – the problem still remains: is it Ricks's or the author's? Pater describes Lamb "seeming to himself but to hand on to others, in mere humble ministrations, that of which for them he is really the creator – this is the way of his criticism." "The creator, not even?" Ricks comments with distaste, thinking of Pater's own appropriations. According to Ricks, Pater took over his texts by misquoting them; but this seems cynical in comparison with the way in which a critic can make his chosen text his own by finding things in it which the author never put there.

That so little is accorded to chance seems part of that lack of spaciousness and ease in these essays which I noticed earlier. Everything is controlled, and controlled by one pressing intelligence. This is true not only of these essays: The subject of Ricks's last book, the poetry of Keats, needs to be treated with tact: part of Keats's virtue is his unselfconsciousness; even his vulnerability. But the effect of Ricks's undoubted ingenuity in *Keats and Embarrassment* is to turn Keats into somebody more like Ricks, ingenious and knowing – or cunning, as Ricks has it. Being a book and not an essay, this all got spelt out, and Keats got nailed down. It could be argued that an essay would have met Ricks's needs better, but this had already been done, some twelve years earlier, by John Bayley. The effect of Bayley's piece is to bring us to admire something essentially vulnerable, for its qualities vary different from those of the critic. The effect of Ricks's

book is to make it invulnerable, by finding in it the critic's own qualities. In general, the less brilliant and academic the writer, the less happy is Ricks's commentary. The same technique gets applied to them all.

In other words, Ricks's criticism is always a tour de force. On Empson or Hill it is a tour de force because of their academic sophistication; on Gower or Dylan it is a tour de force because of their lack of it. The phrase is suggestive: the "force of poetry" may on occasion be no match for the force of criticism. At its best the force of Ricks's criticism is strength or vigour; sometimes it is just force. A "turn by force": the word *turn* is one of Ricks's favourites, as well it might be: he is a student of the turn of phrase; he turns a neat phrase himself; and he knows how to turn others' phrases to his ends, and make use of them in turn. Above all, an essay by Ricks is itself a turn. One might even say that the tour de force is Ricks's tour de strength – to overstretch or twist the phrase in the Ricks fashion.

After a while this sort of thing can seem decidedly forced. The verbalizing grates: "a good many . . . a bad many", "an air's breath" (hair's breadth) and so on. "Poetry is tempted to say, lo and behold", Ricks tells us. Why is it tempted to say any such thing? Because Ricks wants a pun: "the art of sinking in poetry presents 'something very low' to a reader 'who beholds'". . . . "Many a sparrow – including, as it happens, the scholar John Sparrow . . .". What next? Language, even poet's language, is tormented and twisted to fit Ricks's needs. One can't help feeling that the critic ricks the language unnecessarily (*OED*: "to sprain, twist or wrench").

The constrictions of such verbal games seem worst when applied to a subject such as Stevie Smith who uses verbal humour herself so liberatingly. The whimsical poem "Private Means is Dead" plays with the words *major* and *general* in a way that only she could get away with. Stevie Smith's poetry cocks a snook at the critic, and the basic question of how *faux* her *naïveté* is mocks his attentions, as Ricks himself is aware. It is genuinely brave of Ricks to try. Yet is this poem even "partly about the language's being eager to doff its civilian clothes and don its uniform" – indeed what does the phrase mean? Later picking up the word "deathwards" from a piece of conversation, and "animation" from a poem, he writes: "in rhythm and rhyme she found her deathwards animation most vividly and memorably." Death – memorial, you see; but what does the sentence mean? By way of explanation Ricks quotes these lines:

They walked by the estuary,
Eve and the Virgin Mary,
And they talked until nightfall,
But the difference between them was radical.

Ricks doesn't talk about the rhythm, but he does about the rhyme. Such rhyming is "a deadly or deathly thing to do, and a poet who was happy about death would be happy some times to rhyme so". Why is it a "deathly" thing to do? Or "deathly" – and which, by the way? Certainly the rhyme seems to express with humour and pathos the sense of things not fitting. This sense of a "radical" flaw in the way things fit or don't fit together is not just appropriate to these words, but runs through Stevie Smith's poetry: such rhymes she loves also for their expression of weakness, even hopelessness. Ricks continues: "The Murderer" ends:

She was not like other girls – rather diffident,
And that is how we had an accident.
What a diffident accident a rhyme may be – and no less lethal for that. But part of Ricks's argument has been that the rhymes are not accidents, "diffident" or otherwise. (And can accidents be diffident?) He goes on: "A diffident rhyme might be expected to be a coupling which will rise as an arch – why not an iceberg, or float like a pair of ducks or fly like the notes from a gong? Because Ricks wants to say, in her poems: 'It is a couple which leaves all in rubble'. And you will only know why he should want to say that when you come to the point, that Stevie Smith rhymes those words 'couple' and 'rubble' – in three places. 'Such rhyming reaches its high point in the nadir of a dialectic rhyme' – *plink!* *I zanib*, says Ricks. But I will not say our spirits do likewise. Nor indeed harm anyone, for, of course, the

nothing much is said either. Essentially Ricks's essay does nothing more than point out the obvious about Stevie Smith – her longio for death, her affinity with the infantine and the inane. But as to how it is that her strengths come from her wooing of weakness, how her most artful effects are achieved by disavowing all art – perhaps no critic can help us here. Her wit, pathos and complete unpredictability seem remote from the deathly stuff of Ricks's analysis. Criticism is simply too pedestrian for her flights. (Should we not, by the way, call a halt to the convention of naming Stevie Smith's drawings? I hate to disagree with Philip Larkin – whom Ricks quotes approvingly on this – but for the most part I don't think it's just to dismiss them as "cute". What about the drawings that accompany "The Fool" or "Nourish Me on an Egg", for example?)

Given Ricks's fondness for the self-reflexive effect, whereby the text appears to comment on itself, it is inevitable that he should rely heavily on the notion of enactment. Ricks admirably cites the well-known passage in Keats's "To Autumn":
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
"as we pass across the line-division from 'keep' to 'steady', we are made to enact, analogically, the upright steady carriage of the gleaner as she steps from one stone to the next." This scarcely seems to be the case: the reader is here imagining the lines to enact what they only describe. One could with as much justice argue that the interruption of the steady iambic flow between "keep" and "steady", taken with the cascade of syllables "Steady thy laden", suggests that the gleaner has lost her balance and is tottering into the brook. As Peter Barry pointed out in an excellent article entitled "The Enactment Fallacy" (*Essays in Criticism*, April 1980, volume xxx, no 2) this New Critical play is essentially that of Johnson's duff critic Dick Minin:

"Honour is like the glassy bubble,
Which cost philosophers such trouble;
Where, one part crack'd, the whole doth fly,
And wisd is crack'd to find out why.

In these verses, says Minin, we have two striking accommodations of the sound to the sense. It is impossible to utter the two lines emphatically without an act like that which they describe: *bubble* and *trouble* causing a momentary inflation of the cheeks by the retention of the breath, which is afterwards forcibly emitted, as in the practice of *blowing bubbles*. But the greatest excellence is in the third line, which is *crack'd* in the middle to express a crack, and then shivers into monosyllables . . . Ricks is no Minin, it goes without saying; but his own subtle version of Mininism does sometimes obtrude, as for example here on Milton:

He through the armed Files
Darts his experient eye, and soon-traverse
The whole Battalion views, thir order due,
Thir visages and stature as of Gods,
Thir number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hardning in his strength
Glories.

"The word 'Darts' darts forward into 'heart' (assimilating Satan's heart to its aggressive impulses), and then 'heart' bards into the word 'hardning', into *d* (as the aggression indurates itself)." Leaving that five-line dart aside, in what sense does the word "heart" harden – rather than, say, soften – into "hardning", into *d*?

Ricks's method is derived from New Criticism. He is excellent on poets such as Johnson and Milton, who are "external" or work "from the outside", to use Leavis's words as Ricks adopts them. The Johnson piece, which is early enough to avoid the disruptive and destructive word-play, makes some simple but far-reaching observations on Johnson's use of cliché. It is based on his youthful translation of Addison's *Procellum inter Pygmaeos et Graecos*, a Latin imitation of the Batrachomyomachia. The briefest essay in the book, and one of the earliest, it still seems to me the most successful. It has three qualities which, taken together, distinguish it as a brilliant piece of criticism: it is unexpected; once set before the reader it seems evidently true; and, though based on detail, it affects the view of the author as a whole. The reader, as it were, is taken by surprise. As a result, his style is modest and economical, and gets on with the job in hand. The essay on

Milton is another such. The awe with which Ricks is struck in this essay is clearly inspired by Milton, and in general he is both just and moving, unfolding otherwise hidden things to our eyes.

Part of the success of these pieces is, as I say, that their subjects are external, and do not require the critic to feel his way in to his subject. But part is due to the fact that, of all the writers he discusses, these are the least vulnerable. Ricks is best when he does not feel the vulnerability of his subject. He is original, and like all original minds, he enjoys inverting received truths. But this is not the only reason why his best-known crusades – Bob Dylan and the cliché – involve demonstrating the invulnerability of something that looks embarrassingly vulnerable. It is, of course, especially striking if you can find sapphires in the mud. Such a search has obvious rewards. But there's often an embarrassing smell of garlic, and then what? Ricks shies away from embarrassment: his subjects become deodorized by the verbal ingenuity; they become as ingenious and above reproach as Ricks himself. The paradoxical effect of his treatment of embarrassment in Keats is to show that there is nothing really embarrassing involved. His treatment of clichés, similarly, involves such knowing, dexterous use of the words that in his hands they are no longer clichés. A "cliché" that is strikingly or originally used is no longer a cliché, any more than (as John Sparrow once pointed out) "litter" is still litter once it is in a litter-bin. Yet in *Keats and Embarrassment* Ricks himself describes as ridiculous the "fatigued self-congratulation on being transcendently superior to ridicule". More than that, unless he is prepared to open himself to the possibility of ridicule – unless, in a word, he makes himself vulnerable – the critic himself is likely to fail, once he attempts a more than purely linguistic criticism.

"The world of daily banality (lavatories and fly-buttons) is one where the moments of possible social embarrassment (as with eating and masking love) are indeed the moments of great vulnerability, and are monstrously continuous with murder." The fierceness of this observation is striking, and consorts oddly with his remark, on the same page, about being one of the "maggoty-headed credulous fellows". There are no flies, and no maggots, on Ricks. *The Force of Poetry* is forceful, masterful as well as masterly – to use one of his own pet distinctions – in its turning of all to the one glittering gold. Not all his subjects would be grateful for the attention.

Philip Larkin, for example. Larkin's own appeal – "Wanted: a good Hardy critic" – could easily be applied to himself. It looks like a good Larkin critic will be a long time coming, but as the poems are so wonderfully available and enjoyable as they are, that's hardly a cause for distress. Here Ricks's observations seem fussy and beside the mark; trying to decide how to read the line "What will survive of us is love", or objecting to the lines from "The Whitsun Weddings"

– and none
Thought of the others they would never meet
Or how their lives would all contain this hour
because "I don't know how the man knows that none of them thought those things (and yet this itself doesn't seem to be up for scrutiny within the poem)". Why should it be "up for scrutiny" on an intuitive faculty that tells us how right these lines are in the context of this magical passage which concludes the poem. It doesn't make much difference whether you find Larkin wanting or elevate him to invulnerability by this sort of process. The critic may talk on, but we are listening to the poet.

Larkin is not masterful, invulnerable: he is reticent – "perhaps", "almost", "it seems". Ricks has no time for reticence. The ways of expressing it irritate him. "Almost", a sort of these ways of avoiding the impression of certainty can certainly be deceitful, and they can be overdone. But Ricks's repeated scorn for them, at least in prose, is hard; and his unwillingness to qualify makes his own writing hard. He associates hardness with strength, and softness with weakness.

An examination of Ricks's own language confirms this. Take the essay on Beddoes. Now, Beddoes's stock-in-trade is the macabre, but he is graciously witty in it, not heavy-handed;

and if there is black humour, there is also charm. Beddoes, like Eliot (according to Ricks), saw "so much of life as a grotesque and sinister farce". This is why he is said to writhe with "grotesque vitality", a "sick and febrile energy" and "vibrant contempt". But what is especially interesting is that language itself is violent, and it appears to call forth the critic's force to control it: the very parts and figures of speech become violent. A pun is "familiar and contemptuous" (or he puns "fiercely"); an internal rhyme has its "own insinuating tension or torsion" (which?); off-rhymes have "swagging and swaggering insolence" (what, both?); a hidden sense is "leering". Some of these, like Beddoes's "murdering the usual confidence that 'murder will out'" (by tamely remarking that "poetry will out"), could be accounted for by the desire to play up a macabre subject for all it's worth. But Ricks speaks of Beddoes's having "recourse to the shadowy violence of what I call the snit-pun" – thus an intrinsically violent form? Ricks discovers something like an anti-pun in "that cold bed diseases make for us": here apparently "Beddoes likes the swell of a suggestion which may then be rebuffed or even humiliated". Ricks himself admits to a violent streak when it comes to dealing with words: "it is worth stealing the word 'inter-inanimates' for Beddoes's art, so that it may be

wrested to mean, as it did not for Donne, 'makes inanimate' too in its interrelation"; the words "worms" and "vomited" are linked by "a twist of *vermi* (Latin: *vermis*, worm)" (why the dative, incidentally?). At the beginning of the essay, "only one powerful critic" has written convincingly about Beddoes; not so by the end.

A peaceful gathering of essays, not a march of chapters: what track has the march of Ricks's intelligence followed over the years? It is striking how difficult it is to distinguish the essays of twenty years ago from those of today. The writing has become a little wordier and more involuted as the obsession with word-games has taken hold: undecorated with irrelevancies the points used to be made quicker. But the same minuteness of observation and verbal acumen are there throughout; and details of wording are now as then the focus of attention. If the treasures he sometimes finds are too rarely related to the whole from which they come, they are treasures none the less. The force of poetry calls forth a forceful response. Did Professor Ricks have this in mind when he seized, for his title, upon those words of Johnson, in which he describes the force of poetry as "that force which calls new powers into being"? At least the mind that wrote these essays is *alive*, and worth any number of those which never seem to feel that force.

Fraternal fissures

Chris Baldick

TERRY EAGLETON
The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to post-structuralism
133pp. Verso £15 (paperback, £3.95).
086091 091 t

For all its apparent acrimony and contention, literary criticism craves consensus, which is why even such a nonconformist as F.R. Leavis formulated the essential critical question as the corroborative "This is so, is it not?" The dream of modern criticism is a civilized exchange of opinions already shared, a reasonable dialogue between equals in the pacific Republic of Letters. Criticism's entry into the school and university curriculum was inspired by the hope of healing social divisions with just such a consensual bond. All this makes the opening sentence of Terry Eagleton's book so very unconvincing: "Modern European criticism was born of a struggle against the absolutist state." At this, readers who are unfamiliar with the quality of Eagleton's recent work will brace themselves for a dose of reckless schematism. Happily, such expectations will be disappointed, and this opening move appears almost to be a ruse contrived to embarrass those expectations themselves, as in the trick ending of Eagleton's last book *Literary Theory*. The crucial word here is "European", for the true subject of this book is not the iconoclasm of the Continental Enlightenment but the development of the Anglophone critical tradition from that intimate class fraternization which was sealed in the coffee-houses of Addison's London.

The guiding concept of *The Function of Criticism* is borrowed from Jürgen Habermas via the recent work of Peter Hobendahl: the "public sphere" of early bourgeois discourse which can imagine its closed world of unspecialized gentlemanly conversation as the very language of universal rationality. It is this loose but collaborative intercourse and interchangeability of readers and writers which, even more than the rural "organic community", embodies the nostalgic ideal of modern English criticism, especially in its Leavisian form. Indeed, Eagleton's account of the public sphere's disintegration bears some resemblance (albeit transvalued) to that of Q. D. Leavis in *Fiction and the Reading Public*. Invaded by market forces, by a new alien public, and by political dissension, the public sphere (and with it the identity of criticism) is broken into the divergent roles of the Grub Street hack immersed in the degrading commodification of literature, and the Romantic sage ineffectually transcending it. The same fissure is traced through the Victorian "Man of Letters", the academic split between criticism and scholarship, *Scrutiny's* attempted solution, and finally to the divided humanist and structuralist elements in the rise of theory in the 1970s.

Eagleton's great strength, exhibited in this brief essay in relatively pure form, is his tenacity in pursuing a contradiction through its every shifting guise and permutation, from the prose style of Samuel Johnson to the very vortex of contemporary Deconstruction. Of all living Marxist critics, he is most emphatically the dialectician, working from Marx's analysis not of Balzac but of the commodity and its paradoxes; and it is the resulting stress upon contradiction which ensures that his historical placings of writers highlight rather than erase their particular features. Always alert to the underside or reversible lining of any intellectual model, Eagleton tracks the cross-currents and strategies of literary criticism with a uniquely agile understanding. As a historical narrative, *The Function of Criticism* is more concerned with the continuity of an urgent problem than with illustrative detail, and there are moments in the sprint from the *Spectator* to post-structuralism when the book appears to have been designed on the back of an envelope. If this brief study carries a sense of giddy acceleration, it corresponds to Eagleton's own reversal at speed from the cul-de-sac of Parisian theory. His valediction is a telling deflation of the anti-authoritarian pretensions of Deconstruction, delivered in appropriate slapstick imagery: For what after all could be more unanswerably authoritarian than a discourse which, in the very act of pulling the carpet from under its opponents, presents them with a profile so attenuated that there is no place to hit it, which cannot be knocked down because it is always already sprawling on the floor?

This is more than a further instalment in some infinite series of carpet-pullings, because Eagleton, disdaining this sort of immunity, exposes in an authentically Marxist gesture the underpinnings of his own discourse. The socialist critic, he argues, is not "above" the problem of the public sphere, but is stranded as much as the Victorian sage between engagement and critical distance, given the crippling absence today of a socialist counter-culture (or "counterpublic sphere") of the kind which sustained Brecht and Benjamin. In the urgency and integrity of this view, Terry Eagleton has marked out a position which further discussions of the state of criticism will have to address if they are to take their historical bearings.

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The first stirrings

Roy Porter

JOHN C. GREENE
American Science in the Age of Jefferson
484pp. Iowa State University Press.
0813801028

The history of American science has long ceased to be *terra incognita*. Thanks to R. P. Stearns and Brooke Hladik, the precocious developments of the colonial and revolutionary period have been expertly traced, and a younger generation of scholars is now probing the maturing of the scientific community since the mid-nineteenth century. It is, indeed, the science of the early republic which oddly has remained little explored. The neglect of this period may seem curious, yet it is a forbidding, complicated terrain, with few outstanding landmarks.

The colonial prelude by contrast yields the historian a bold tale of science discovering the new continent, and affords heroes as well, above all Ben Franklin. From about the 1830s, American science becomes a success story which writes itself, as native-born researchers claim their place at the forefront of the international scientific community—Bache and Henry in physics, Hall and Dana in geology. But the achievements of the first half-century after the revolution are altogether more equivocal. Dwarfed by Franklin, even such home-grown practitioners as Benjamin Silliman do not merit inclusion in Daniel Boorstin's pantheon of "discoverers". The leading scientists in the United States still tend to be European-born and bred, such as the maverick naturalist Rafinesque, and the pioneer student of Indian linguistics Du Ponceau.

Though numerous societies and journals sprang up around the turn of the nineteenth century, many failed to survive or thrive, and little public taste for popular science was generated. Moreover, both private patronage and government support continued to be fickle, so that even a noble enterprise, such

as Lewis and Clark's transcontinental trek, yielded a disappointingly thin and late crop of scientific fruit. Nor did the colleges blaze a trail. Even at Harvard the medical school remained weak till the building of the Massachusetts hospital in the 1820s, and the university had no astronomical observatory before 1839. Though James Jackson was boasting in 1802 that European science "would soon be eclipsed by the new light that is here springing up", in reality Old World savants could sleep soundly in their beds a while longer.

In a study whose learning is matched by its modesty, John C. Greene has at last set the confused stirrings of this era into a coherent framework, and this is no mean achievement. Freely acknowledging the absence of dazzling discoveries, Green characterizes it as a "formative period", valuable for "laying foundations". Stressing diversity and the role of individuals, he discounts grand synthesis, making short work of Struik's crude Marxist reading of the transformations of "Yankee science". Trusting instead to biography and narrative, Greene surveys the spectrum of the sciences from astronomy to zoology, ranging from Boston to Charleston, and then west to Lexington, sketching in as he goes scores of skilful pen-portraits of unsung worthies such as Audubon's predecessor the tireless Scottish-born ornithologist Alexander Wilson.

Greene thus works outwards from details, and his piecemeal empiricism reflects the fractured nature of the times. Yet his close-focused approach means that certain issues go by default, notably the compass and connections of natural knowledge. Greene declares from the outset that applied science falls outside his brief. Such an exclusion may, on the face of it, seem justified—after all, the scientific community's vocal Baconian utilitarianism remained largely window-dressing. But it is a pity none the less that Greene did not cast his net more widely, and gauge bow much—or, as he surmises, how little—the diffusion of science mattered to engineers, manufacturers and agriculturalists. H. J. Habakkuk classically

drew attention to the exceptional ingenuity of American technology: did science (viewed as data, as method, or as an ethos) contribute to this?

Greene also excludes medical thinking, and this exclusion seems particularly arbitrary, for doctors formed a high proportion of devotees of science, and investigations of the environment were spurred by questions of epidemics and salubrity. Keeping meteorological records and understanding climate were key medico-scientific pursuits, yet Greene virtually ignores them (misled by too modern and limited a notion of "geography"); and in labelling Benjamin Barton's accounts of the medicinal virtues of plants "digressions", he betrays a similarly anachronistic view of the scope of botany.

Indeed Greene divides his subject up into present-day disciplinary boxes—astronomy, chemistry, physical anthropology—and this rather Whiggish heuristic precludes any sustained analysis of how American savants construed Nature as a whole or viewed the scientist's task in mediating between Nature and society. Great debates have been raging between historians of science, students of American culture and feminists as to the relations between science and ideology, science and politics, science and the moving frontier.

Doing it by numbers

Roger Cooter

JAMES H. CASSEY
American Medicine and Statistical Thinking, 1800-1860
306pp. Harvard University Press. £19.80.
0674025601

Surrounded by digital display and bombarded by the binary numerical overflow from computers, it is difficult to imagine the time when data gathering and computation were only beginning to be regarded as self-evident means to understanding the world. We forget that it was only during the so-called Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that quantification, as the ultimate principle of analysis, was introduced and that it was later still, in the blaze of the Industrial Revolution, that statistics as we know it made its debut. This period has often been described as "The Era of Enthusiasm" for statistical enquiries. Yet few historians have sought to recover the historical process whereby the practice of statistics and the mentality for it came into being, let alone from the perspective of a single field of human endeavour in a single national context.

Such is the assignment of *American Medicine and Statistical Thinking, 1800-1860*. Although primarily a narrative of what James Cassidy styles the "coming of age" of statistics in America, the work establishes only too well how the mentality of quantification was actively forged by the participants in this particular historical context. Viewed through the lens of medicine in antebellum America, the interest in statistics emerges not as something self-evident or merely waiting around to be activated, but rather as a historical event shaped by various socio-political forces—a point made all the more clear through the account of the demise around the middle of the century of the initial enthusiasm for statistics. In his early chapters, Cassidy shows how, among a new generation of medical men (many of whom had studied in Paris under the father of "numerical medicine", Pierre Louis) statistics became a part of the weaponry of orthodox medicine. Both as a particular approach to medicine and as crude propaganda to themselves, they were scientifically deployed against the "theoretical" medical systems of John Brown and Benjamin Rush on the one hand, and against the new, fearfully competitive medical practices of the Thomsonian botanics, hydropaths, homoeopaths, mesmerists, bone-setters and eclectics on the other. Subsequent chapters extend this discussion to the "irregulars'" own use of statistics and reveal further areas of negotiation opened up by the use and abuse and/or avoidance of statistics, as in relation to midwifery, gynaecology and surgery and, more broadly, in the realms of psychiatry and public health.

science and patriarchy; but such issues hardly get a mention here.

Of course, as his title suggests, there is a theme uniting Greene's empirical detail: Thomas Jefferson. Greene is right to credit the stimulus given by Jefferson's seminal *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) and to marvel at his boundless intellectual energy (in investigating Indian philology, for example). But his image of Jefferson as a sort of presiding genius of American science (even in archaeology, Greene writes, "Jefferson set an example with his excavation of a burial mound") smacks of a rather laboured literary device. Greene half-heartedly hints that there was a prevailing Jeffersonian temper in science, but this idea needs refinement, for the age's geology and anthropology, coloured by Protestant Biblical Deism. And more discussion is needed of the tensions between Jefferson's promotion of science and his anti-federalist suspicion of central patronage.

Professor Greene's book does not resolve these problems; though, as he would rightly insist, there are no easy answers. Yet thanks to his familiarity with the language of science in the early republic, we can now find our way round it as never before.

In approaching his subject in this way, Cassidy is unhampered by the fact that most of the individuals he considers were only third-rate followers of such European and British "statists" as Villermé, Quetelet, Chadwick and Farr. The American story is all the more interesting for the record of frustration and sense of shortcoming experienced by those who sought to cultivate the imported ideas and practices in a very different social and political setting. Nor does Cassidy's general approach make it necessary for him to apologize for the restrictions that his historical focus imposes both on the overall history of American medicine and history of the statistical movement in America. In fact, the book is remarkably comprehensive in both these respects.

Yet as a piece of intellectual and social history, *American Medicine and Statistical Thinking* falls well short of its nearest companion volume, M. J. Cullen's *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain* (1975). Unlike Cullen, Cassidy shows little interest in the wider ideological dimensions of the concern with quantification. While not denying that those who championed statistics in America were men of their time, he does not critically assess the social, political and cultural significance of the statistical activity (as distinct from its casual effects or ineffectiveness). The focus on medicine serves to excuse such concern, while the medical men discussed too often appear not as the ideologues they were (consciously or not), but as mere progressives. Naïve Baconians many of them may have been, but their earnest claims for what counts as "real" knowledge, their passionate interest in educational reform, or their preoccupation with the vital statistics of paupers, lunatics and criminals hardly permits the historian to do his reckoning at these men's "own level" and on their own terms. Behind the granting of that liberties' term, the assumption that, because they were the historical victors in the struggle for the kind of thought and "rational" medicine they advocated, their terms were essentially the right ones with which we are all in agreement. In short, the author assumes too much. Though it would be unfair to conclude that this study approximates what Jean-Baptiste Say claimed of statistics itself in 1802, that it was only "description in detail", Cassidy makes rather less than more of the sources from which he has successfully blown the dust.

William Whewell, *Selected Writings on the History of Science* (392pp. University of Chicago Press. £32.20. Paperback, £13.80. 0 226 89433 9), edited by Yehuda Elkana, contains a short biographical introduction and reprinted extracts from, amongst other works, the third edition of the *History of the Inductive Sciences* (1847), and the second edition of *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1847), neither of

Ultimates in extravagance

Andrew Saint

LELAND M. ROTH
McKim, Mead and White, Architects
441pp. Thames and Hudson. £20.
0300340943

Never has architecture enjoyed such palmy opportunities as it did in turn-of-the-century America. For all the munificence meted out to them by grandees, popes and kings, Palladio, Bernini and Mansart each raised only a scattering of churches, palaces, villas, parks and monuments. For the New York magnates whom they served, McKim, Mead and White created all these things, on a scale just as sumptuous and heroic. But they built much else besides: banks, hospitals, libraries, yachts, power stations, tall flats—the range could be quickly extended. Turning the pages of Leland Roth's monograph, the reader will stumble on three tremendous ensembles: the Madison Square Garden, the Boston Public Library and Pennsylvania Station. In a sleeper age or country, any of these could have consumed a complete architectural career; in the oeuvre of McKim, Mead and White they are a drop in the bucket. Between 1887 and 1892, Roth tells us, the firm (then eight years established) took on some 185 commissions worth nearly thirteen-and-a-half million dollars. Five dollars could be got for a pound in glorious 1890. A large-ish English public building, hotel, or tip-top country house might then cost £100,000; the lavish Natural History Museum, on which expenditure got out of control, cost £600,000. So, conservatively, McKim, Mead and White were designing the equivalent of twenty-five major buildings or four Natural History Museums in six short years.

Yet no one could belittle the quality of the firm's work; it was consistently of the highest. Comparisons, however invidious, sometimes need stating flatly. Taking into account range, technique, originality and elegance, American architecture between 1880 and 1930 was the best in the Western world. The English could design delightful houses but often fell down when they tackled public buildings. In France, the reverse was the case. Other European countries lacked the same scale of opportunity until after 1918, when they began wrestling back the initiative. These are bald generalizations, made because many Europeans still do not appreciate the historical depth and richness of American architecture, tending for instance to refer all virtue around the turn of the century to a single city, Chicago.

For this, the American treatment of its own legacy is sorely to blame. New York above all has been criminal in its profligacy. The visitor looking about there for many a masterpiece illustrated in this book will seek in vain. Gone are the Madison Square Garden and the Madison Square Church, gone the Knickerbocker Trust Bank and the Golet Building, all too small and stunted for the speculative maw. Recently the Villard Houses on Madison Avenue, the earliest essay in the warm Italian classicism that McKim, Mead and White made specially their own, have been "saved" only by the device of turning them into the lobby of a looming hotel tower immediately behind. Gone above all is Pennsylvania Station, McKim's astounding juxtaposition of Caracal nobility and lacy steelwork. (Here before it could be demolished another great American architect, Louis Kahn, had the taste to die.) Some of these buildings disappeared breath-takingly soon after they were erected. Roth quotes a friend of Stanford White's, writing in 1919 when the sixteen-year-old Madison Square Church, rich in materials and workmanship, was pulled down: "There is no room in America for a past—no not for a yesterday... Learning, talent, logic and beauty have been subordinated to the fantastic needs of a queer period, to a mood-race of white-people, who develop and change faster than men have ever changed before, so fast, in fact, that any abstract of their mind shows distortions and gyrations as of a thing in motion."

McKim, a cool, cultured man, ardent only in his profession, sprang from a sober Quaker background but abandoned that world to become the apostle of architectural luxury. "the gentle result of beauty", Mead, the Crassus of the triumvirate, designed little but kept the

firm running; the sculptor Saint-Gaudens made a sketch showing the earthbound Mead pulled in opposite directions by kites labelled McKim and White. White was the natural inventive genius, tall, zealous, playful, capable of turning out five buildings to McKim's one. He achieved as much fame through his designs as through his designs. For his philanthropy with the matchless teenage beauty, Evelyn Nesbit, White was shot dead on the roof of his own creation, Madison Square Garden, by a crazed rival, and titillating revelations followed. It was the climax of the firm's career. McKim died three years later, in 1909. Successors carried on and built major buildings, but the magic was gone.

Those who write about McKim, Mead and White tend to warm to one or the other of the predominant partners. Roth is no exception; though always judicious, he is a McKim man. He deals deftly but briefly, almost prudishly, with White's private life, holding it back to the end. He does not dilute upon the world of social extravagance which the firm felt bound to serve. For Roth the architecture is the thing, above all the urban architecture in which McKim found his métier after 1890. This emphasis is reasonable, since the early country and resort houses, built in the pretty Shingle Style with which the firm first made its mark,

have been fairly pored over in recent years. Not that these have been fully explained. It remains strange that McKim and White, both of whom spent time in France and worked for the grand francophile H. H. Richardson, should have begun by designing buildings so very English.

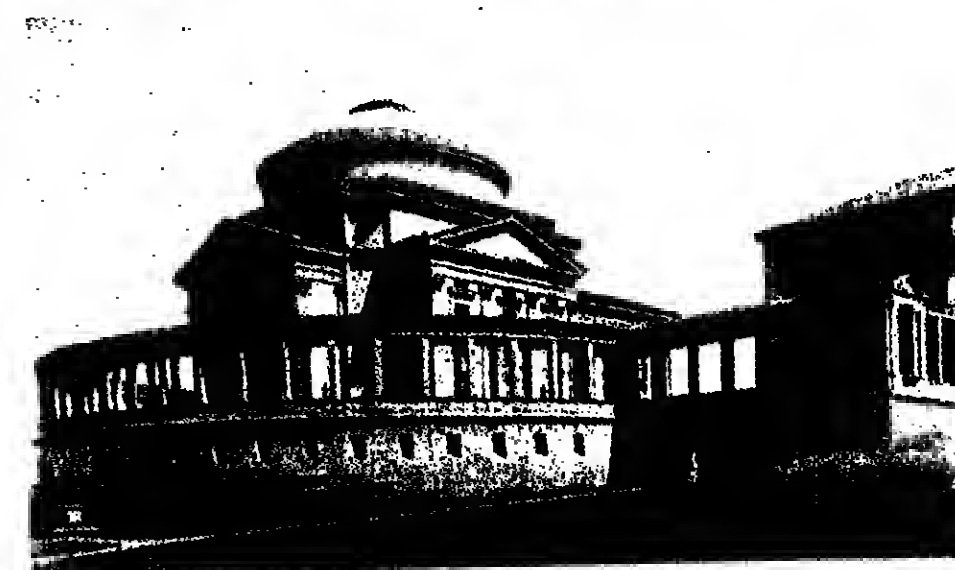
The Frenchness of their architecture took some time to emerge. When it did, as Roth rightly shows, it took second place to an Italian suavity. McKim, Mead and White are normally thought of as the architects who, after Richard Morris Hunt, did most to promote Beaux-Arts ideology in American design. If this is true, it is true only of McKim, who alone of the partners attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Even McKim cared less for the modern planning principles inculcated in Paris than for the authentic recreation in America of antique grandeur. After the Beaux-Arts movement got its initial fillip from the great court at the Chicago World Fair of 1893, McKim proposed an American Academy in Rome, not, significantly, Paris (Roth says little about this important foundation). And while building the Morgan Library in New York, McKim blandly proposed to the formidable Pierpont Morgan that he should spend an extra \$50,000 on "masonry", an ancient method of jointing monumental masonry which involved minute

precision in grinding down the surfaces. His sole justification for this invisible improvement was that he had tried without success to insert a knife blade between the stones of the Erechtheum, and wanted to see if he could get the same result.

Morgan assented. It is incredible what, as the accredited cultural experts to the American rich, the partners would do or could get away with. Visiting the Baths of Caracalla, McKim hired a posse of Italians to stroll around so that he could get a sense of scale and movement. And Roth quotes a delightfully disingenuous comment made by White to mollify an angry client: "The changes I have made in the treatment of the smaller rooms have added over a hundred thousand dollars to the price of the house, and I have dreaded to speak to you about it until the house was far enough finished for you to see the result." In today's litigious America, the recipient of such a letter would immediately call his attorney.

Long though it is, Roth's book by no means looks into every cranny of the firm's work. Even with omissions one has a sense of unremitting hate, of White in particular rushing up and down the East Coast, building houses in Boston, banks in New York and Philadelphia, model villages, university libraries, and even, improbably, a weird steel transmission tower for the mystical genius-cum-charlatan of high-voltage electricity, Nikola Tesla. White may have been in a hurry, his occasional skyscrapers and churches were certainly second-rate, but in range of style and fertility of decorative work he was unsurpassed. He worked with Saint-Gaudens on some very fine monuments, and Roth believes that in his last years his architecture was acquiring a severity akin to McKim's. How was it all done? There were assistants in their hundreds, some of whom made large contributions to designs. Joseph Wells produced the elevations of the Villard Houses and would certainly have become a partner, had he not died; others, like Thomas Hastings and Cass Gilbert, became well-known architects in their own right. But such was Mead's grip that McKim and White never had to leave the drawing-board, as modern architects in large firms seem inevitably to do in the end.

The book is irreproachably researched and produced, and not unreasonably priced. The author writes flatly in the main and does not question accepted judgments, but he warms up on the great projects. Where he strays from aesthetics he is absorbing, and one might wish he had strayed more often. There is an interesting account of the Boston Symphony Hall, really the first building of moment in the modern science of acoustics, designed with the help of the great Sabine of Harvard. One could have wished for more on how these splendid buildings were constructed and erected, especially on the question of the firm's preference for vaulting, which implied concrete and tiles, over trabeation, for which steelwork was better suited. Small gaps like these should not stop the book from finding a place on the shelves of anyone intelligently interested in American architecture.



McKim, Mead and White's Gould Library of New York University, built 1896-1903, and the Hall of Fame, 1900-01; reproduced from the book reviewed above.

Defensive outlook

J. M. Richards

W.A. NELSON
The Dutch Forts of Sri Lanka: The military monuments of Ceylon
152pp. Edinburgh: Canongate. £18.
0862410622

A study of this subject was badly needed. Many of the artillery forts built by the Dutch between 1658, when they ejected the Portuguese from Sri Lanka, and 1796, when they lost it to the British, are well preserved. That at Galle on the island's southern coast, initially the Dutch capital, along with that at Jaffna in the north, was perhaps the finest European-built stronghold in the whole of the East and is still wonderfully complete. Yet little has been written about them and they do not seem to be as highly valued as they should be, even in Sri Lanka. The list of World Heritage monuments recently issued by the government there in response to an appeal from Unesco to list monuments restricted itself to the remains of ancient cities like Anuradhapura, ignoring the equally remarkable remains of the Colonial period. Moreover, the impressive view from the landward side of the fortifications at Galle, which totally enclose the old town on its sea-girt peninsula, has during the past couple of years been obstructed by a Government-built athletics stadium enclosed by high walls, occupying ground that has stood open for centuries.

The Dutch Forts of Sri Lanka should lead to this unique series of monuments being better appreciated. It is unfortunate, however, that William Nelson does not make it at all clear how recently his account of the forts was com-

pleted. He explains that his main research was undertaken when he was resident in Sri Lanka in the years up to 1938 and expresses regret that he never had the opportunity to produce the larger work on the subject he had then intended. He states that he has recently added to his material without explaining whether he carried out further research on the spot. He admits in his introduction that since his descriptions were written "there have unavoidably been changes at some forts", but he does not specify these and the example of Galle suggests that some of his descriptions are out of date.

Another defect of the book is the poor quality of the photographic illustrations, most of which have the character of amateur snapshots and are singularly uninformative, that of Fort Frederick at Trincomalee ludicrously so. They are moreover too small to be intelligible and are not clearly reproduced. On the other hand the plans of the different forts are clear and well drawn and Nelson's explanations of their military purpose and his descriptions of their layout are excellent. So in his historical account of the role they played—a dual one of defending the Dutch-occupied coastal areas against attack from the sea, principally by rival colonial powers, and against assault on the landward side since the centre of the island remained in the hands of native rulers until several years after the British had driven out the Dutch.

An appendix to the book briefly describes and illustrates Fort George in the Highlands of Scotland, built after the 1745 rebellion, which according to Nelson closely resembles the Sri Lanka forts both in its layout and its method of constructing defensive walls and bastions; earth ramparts faced with slabs of stone.

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John C. Greene

'Ethiopia at Bay'

Sir, - I am much gratified by the generous review of my book *Ethiopia at Bay* by Edward Ullendorf (September 28). Perhaps I might be permitted to respond to some points where we appear to differ?

Professor Ullendorf dismisses as gossip the Emperor's disaffection with his eldest son and the concern for providing for an heir presumptive in place of the Crown Prince. It was not, however, a matter of gossip. Had he participated as I had in the work of the committee drafting the Revised Constitution, Professor Ullendorf would have understood the importance which the highest officials assigned to the provision for an heir presumptive. There was a persistent search for a formula which would allow the Emperor to pass over the Crown Prince in the line of succession. The committee's labours resulted in the language of Article 13 which provides for an heir presumptive "in case of a determination that a male descendant is incapable of meeting the requirements for succession". The Emperor's misgivings with regard to the Crown Prince, later confirmed in 1960 and 1973, had already found expression in the Revised Constitution of 1955.

On a minor point of difference, Ullendorf is distressed at harsh words about the final stage of the British Military Administration in Eritrea and puzzled about sale to the Sudan of some railway rails. Given the loyal diplomatic support which Britain had given to Ethiopia for the recovery of Eritrea, I, for my part, was puzzled and distressed, not to say shocked to discover the extent of the demolitions and sales effected prior to the hand-over. Ullendorf takes exception to my statement concerning the sale to the Sudan of rails for Gondar and for the railway up to the Sudan. Not only those rails but 300 railway cars as well were thus sold.

A matter of far greater significance involves the role of Britain with regard to Ethiopia. I am perplexed by the interpretation which Ullendorf places on my view of the contributions of Britain to the liberation of Ethiopia and the role of British troops in the country. Indeed, from implying, as he seems to suggest, that the British had gone into Ethiopia "in pursuit of colonial ambitions" or for the fun of losing many good men in battle in order to win a war which the United States had not entered at the time. My reiterated position is exactly the contrary. One recurring theme through the book is that Britain's colonial interests had generally operated to the benefit of Ethiopia.

After Italy entered the Second World War on the side of the Axis, Britain was obliged to expel the enemy from the British and the Italian colonies in the region surrounding Ethiopia and inevitably from enemy-occupied Ethiopia in the centre.

I took pains to point out that had it not been for the determined insistence of the government in London and, in particular, of Churchill and Eden, Haile Selassie would never have been returned to Ethiopia as its sovereign head. Indeed, had it not been for Britain, Ethiopia herself would never have been liberated. Britain's colonial interests did not preclude the restoration of the entire territory of Ethiopia to the Imperial Ethiopian Government. In less than three years following the liberation, Britain had agreed to release Ethiopia from military occupation except for the Ogaden. Later, it returned all of that province, and although still later it sought the cession of the Haud, Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker, the bearer of that proposal, immediately withdrew it upon encountering the opposition of the Ethiopian Government.

With regard to the benefit which Ethiopia derived from the British presence in the region, I expressly observed that long after the liberation Ethiopia continued to profit from the presence of British colonial interests in the Middle East. These had the effect of shielding Ethiopia from the assaults of her Islamic neighbours.

The recovery of Eritrea provides another illustration of the same theme. As an American I find it embarrassing that the United States had opposed the claim of Ethiopia to Eritrea - even under a trusteeship arrangement - whereas Britain, the so-called "arch-colonialist", actively and persistently supported Ethiopia's case. I stated that, without Britain's

support Ethiopia's claim would have been a lost cause. Eritrea would otherwise never have been returned to Ethiopia over the opposition of the United States, the Soviet Union, France and the Islamic states.

In the course of the many years of my service I found the authorities in London - the Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker - and, in Addis Ababa, Sir Douglas Busk, far more broad-minded, understanding, and responsive than the authorities in Washington or Paris.

Ethiopia today owes far more to Britain than to any other major power.
JOHN H. SPENCER.
14 Overlook Drive, Madison, Connecticut 06443.

Neo-Darwinism

Sir, - Since Ernst Mayr's defence of neo-Darwinist evolutionary theory (November 2) largely took the form of an attack on a volume of which we were the editors (*Beyond Neo-Darwinism: An introduction to the new evolutionary paradigm*, Academic Press, 1984), we cannot let it pass without comment.

Professor Mayr's article was almost two pages long, and it is not possible to deal with all his criticisms in the space normally allotted to correspondents. We therefore pass over the less crucial issues, such as his curious assertion that necessity is a sort of teleology (which leads us to wonder whether he believes that apples fall to earth so as to achieve their proper positions) and turn to the main point.

Several times in his article, Mayr accuses us either of being ignorant of the literature or of misunderstanding certain issues. Not so: it is only that we are unwilling to take neo-Darwinist claims at face value.

One example will have to serve for many. As Mayr says, the word "random" can be used in two senses in evolution theory; it can mean either that little if anything can be said about the nature of the variations (we may call this "strongly random") or else just that they do not occur preferentially according to need, which we may call "weakly random". Now it is certainly true that to distinguish the theory of evolution by natural selection from what is generally referred to as "Lamarckism" the variations need only be weakly random. The reason that we used the word in the stronger sense is not, as Mayr claims, that we do not understand the distinction, but because that is the meaning it actually has within neo-Darwinism.

Two features of neo-Darwinism demonstrate this quite clearly. One is the insistence that evolutionary change is continuous, despite strong evidence to the contrary from the fossil record. There would be no need for neo-Darwinists to commit themselves so strongly to gradualism if they were willing to accept that certain kinds of large coordinated changes can occur, ie, if they did not suppose that variations are strongly random. (How such changes can occur is described in our volume, in the chapter on Development and Evolution.)

Second, if the variations are not totally random, then they are bound to have an influence on the course of evolution. Conversely, to deny that they have such an influence is to make it clear that one is using the word "random" in the strong sense. And this is precisely what neo-Darwinists do; of many examples we need cite only Mayr himself: "Selection is the only direction-giving force in evolution" (*The Evolutionary Synthesis*, edited by E. Mayr and W. B. Provine, 1980).

Whatever neo-Darwinists may say they mean by random, their operational definition of the word is most certainly in the strong sense.

This example is typical of Mayr's article. At best, he is writing of what neo-Darwinist evolutionary theory might be. We are concerned with what it actually is, and for that we may turn to Michael Ruse's *Darwinism Defended* (1982). In a description of how "modern evolutionary studies proceed" Ruse writes: "What we do in fact find is that the neo-Darwinian presupposes his populationist-genetic core, and then he tries to draw some plausible account of what appears generally the case, or perhaps of particular events, consistent with and directed by his theory." In other words, neo-Darwinists begin by assuming that evolution is caused by the natural selection of strongly random variations

and then devote their efforts to constructing plausible scenarios based on (largely hypothetical) selective advantages. One might expect such a description from a critic, not from an ardent defender of the theory. No wonder neo-Darwinism is sometimes referred to as the "Panglossian paradigm".

In fact, history is repeating itself here. In one of the original neo-Darwinist texts, Julian Huxley's *Evolution, the Modern Synthesis*, we read:

And finally Darwinism itself grew more and more theoretical. The paper demonstration that such a character was or might be adaptive was regarded by many writers as sufficient proof that it must owe its origin to Natural Selection. Evolutionary studies became more and more merely case-books of real or supposed adaptations. Late nineteenth century Darwinism came to resemble the early nineteenth century school of Natural Theology. Paley *redivivus*, one might say, but philosophically upside down with Natural Selection instead of a Divine Artificer as the *Deus ex Machina*.

Now Huxley was not an anti-Darwinist, and neither are we nor the other contributors to our volume. It was not our intention to undervalue the achievements of the synthetic theory and of its architects, including Professor Mayr himself. The title of the volume that has so offended him is *Beyond (not Against) Neo-Darwinism*. But what Huxley wrote about nineteenth-century Darwinism now applies to much of what is being done within twentieth-century neo-Darwinism, and it is time for another change of direction.

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MAE-WAN HO.
Biology Discipline, The Open University, Milton Keynes.

Microdarwiniana

Sir, - In view of the focus of the *TLS* of November 2, readers may be interested in what Eric Korn calls "another curious bit of microdarwiniana". The abundance of Darwiniana at the University Library, Cambridge, has diverted attention from other possible sources for the study of Charles Darwin and the genesis of his ideas. The writing of a book, now in its final stages, on the early years of the London Library and its readers, has - thanks to the generosity of its Librarian Mr Douglas Matthews and his staff - given me access to the early lending registers in which, to quote from a February 1972 *TLS* correspondent, Simon Nowell-Smith, "the reading habits of eminent Victorians . . . are traceable".

These issue books are most difficult to use. The handwriting is often unclear, entries are arranged under members' names in alphabetical order of member, or by author of book borrowed and semi-chronologically within each letter, or in purely chronological order as the books were borrowed. The name of Charles Darwin is reasonably prominent in the issue books covering the periods May 1841-March 1849 and March 1856-August 1858.

The first borrowings are recorded on May 3, 1841. Darwin's name appears by November 26, 1841, when he took away "Godwin on Population" - a title also noted in his "Reading Notebooks" now at Cambridge University (and edited by Peter J. Vorzimmer). Three days before Christmas 1841 Darwin borrowed the seventh and eighth volumes of the Danish dramatic poet Adam Oehlenschläger's *Werke* and the *Predigten* of the Gorman philologist and theologian Schleiermacher.

Of course a volume borrowed is not necessarily a volume or even a sentence read, but borrowing patterns do reveal concerns and interests. Analysis of Darwin's London Library borrowings reveal eclectic interests and add to authors and titles listed in his reading notebooks. Briefly, in 1842 he took away forty-five different titles, the following year forty-six titles, and during 1844 the same number of titles as in 1842. In March 1842 his voracious intellect ranged over Simpson's *Travels in Great Britain*, *Werke* of the German novelist and critic Ludwig Tieck, Schiller and Goethe, plus the first volume of the *Canterbury Tales*. On April 5 he borrowed the first volume, the *Magnolia* and *Letters* of Sheffield's five-volume edition of Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*.

Three of the nine titles recorded under Darwin's name for September 16, 1842, are most difficult to read. The authors and titles which can be reconstructed with an element of certainty range from Richard Whately, *On the Kingdom of Christ*, Montaigne's *Essays* and Scott's *Prose Works*, to Anne Woodroffe's translation *Turi fruiti* of Hermann L. H. Plickler-Muskau. Among the literary authors Darwin seems to have returned to, the names of Scott, George Sand, Washington Irving, Dickens, Goethe and Southey reoccur.

This London Library register evidence supplements our previous knowledge of Charles Darwin's range and depth of interests. It provides valuable additional evidence for an assessment of the source, formation and development of his ideas, and of the language in which he expresses them.

WILLIAM BAKER.
10 Streather Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

Sir, - Eric Korn (Reminders, November 2) says that Darwin, in *The Descent of Man*, dates Galton's *Hereditary Genius* "once, correctly, as 1869 and then four times in succession as 1870 . . . This mistake occurs in the first edition of *The Descent* (1871) and has never been corrected."

My modest twenty-first reprinting of the second edition of *The Descent* (1906) gives the correct date twice and then four times in succession as 1870.

PETER READING.
Ragley View, Little Stretton, Salop.

Philosophy and Biologism

Sir, - In their letter of November 9, Florian von Schlicher and Neil Tennant accuse me of badly misrepresenting their position on sociobiology. But I think that my review of *Sociobiology, Evolution and Human Nature* (October 19) pitched it just about right. The authors do, as I said, sprinkle around a few moderate-sounding remarks. They cite one of them in their letter: "much of the speculation that has taken place has been somewhat wild." Such

disclaimers are not enough to disarm the main criticism. Their Chapter 2 is packed with evolutionary *Just So* stories, as crass as any that were cooked up by sociobiologists in the primitive early days.

My point was that genetic factors underlying human social customs and ethical beliefs have comparatively little differential explanatory power, and that Tennant and von Schlicher fail to say so. They do not provide the methodological or dialectical backgrounds required for appreciating this point. This part of the book, therefore, cannot be counted as philosophy even though the authors wish to pass it off as such. Another reason for steering clear is that many passages are marred by a harsh, belligerent tone - the same tone, indeed, that is discernible in their hot-headed letter.

ANDREW WOODFIELD.
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Peace Movements

Sir, - I have now been particularly impressed by the arguments of Women and Families for Defence, but Charles Mosley (Letters, November 2) seems almost bereft of logic. Crusade, he says, cannot ever be first strike because the missiles would take five hours to reach Soviet territory. But since the missiles cannot be retrieved surely the key moment is that of launch: time of journey has little if any relevance to first strike. Mosley's other odd moment comes when he claims that the US's failure "to impose its will on the Soviet Union" (revealing phrase) when the US had an atomic weapon and the Russians did not shows the dangers of "gratuitously affected imbalance" in weaponry. Surely exactly the same example could be used to show that the American bomb totally failed to act as a deterrent in 1945 and just after?

In a way Mosley's illogic is heartening, since it suggests that Women and Families for Defence must indeed be as desperate for arguments as it seemed at Brighton a few weeks ago.

GEORGE PARFITT.
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'This Real Night'

Sir, - Some reviewers of Dame Rebecca West's recently published posthumous novel *This Real Night* clearly believe that it was written, or at any rate completed, in the author's latter years, long after *The Fountain Overflows*, to which it is the successor.

This firm, which had represented Dame Rebecca since the 1930s, made in 1956 on her behalf three-book contracts with Macmillan here and Viking Press in New York for a trilogy to be entitled *Cousin Rosamond*. *The Fountain Overflows* was the first volume of that trilogy and was published in 1957. When Dame Rebecca died, her estate inherited a considerable volume of unpublished manuscripts, including two versions of the continuation of the saga, which has now been published as *This Real Night*. The first version is a top copy, including pen corrections in the author's hand, of chapters 15-23 of *Cousin Rosamond* and the pages are numbered 593-1129. I believe, although unfortunately there is no one now working either here, at Macmillan, or at Viking who can confirm or deny this, that in 1956 Dame Rebecca delivered 1,129 pages of *Cousin Rosamond* as one novel, with a plan for the continuation of the saga. I believe that her publishers took fright at the notion of a novel of this length and persuaded her to cut it almost exactly in half, publishing the first half as *The Fountain Overflows* and offering her a contract to publish the whole as a trilogy. There is no doubt that she subsequently re-worked the second part of the typescript, thus the second version, and presumably she was subsequently over entirely satisfied with the result. But I believe that in 1956 she was satisfied with those 1,129 pages and that the late A. D. Peters submitted them to her publishers as one novel.

MICHAEL SISSONS.
A.D. Peters and Co, 10 Buckingham Street, London WC2.
A review of *This Real Night* appears on page 130 of this issue

Klaus Mann

Sir, - May I be allowed to make the following comments on Daniel Johnson's review of Klaus Mann (September 28)?

Klaus Mann's suicide (May 21, 1941, in Cannes) was certainly not unconnected with the fact that no one in Germany was prepared to publish the works of the émigré Klaus Mann.

I became Klaus Mann's publisher only in 1963. Between 1949 and 1963 *Der Wendepunkt* was the only work of Klaus Mann to appear in the Federal Republic and as an edited version in Germany of his autobiography *The Turning Point*, which he had written in English. It had been published initially by L. B. Fischer in New York in 1942, before Klaus Mann joined the US Army with which he was to return to Europe. *The Turning Point* was re-published by Victor Gollancz in 1944, and Oswald Wolff is bringing out a new edition this month.

The Klaus Mann renaissance began in Paris with the stage production of *Mephisto* by Arianna Mnouchkine in 1979. Then, late in 1980, Rowohlt published a paperback edition of Mann's novel *Mephisto*, notwithstanding the injunction which Peter Gorski, Gustaf Gründgens's adopted son, had obtained against my publishing his use in 1966. Although this injunction had been upheld by the highest German court in 1971, its wording did not directly affect Rowohlt and he ventured publication in the face of the obvious risk of a now pending being filed. 500,000 copies of this edition have been sold to date.

Daniel Johnson is mistaken: I was not the publisher but I did encourage my colleague Rowohlt in his endeavours and gave him licence to publish, hoping thus to protect publication against renewed legal action - a step which has proved successful until now - and to try and recover part of the very considerable legal costs expended. I also wrote the preface to explain the reasons for publishing a new edition of this novel which had been banned in the Federal Republic for some fourteen years.

I should also mention that Erika Mann, Klaus's sister, did not become an American citizen but became British upon her marriage to Wyndham Auden. Erika Mann had withdrawn her application to become a US citizen in 1946

after years of demeaning interrogations and investigations during the McCarthy era. It may be of interest to mention Erika Mann's memorable letter to E. J. Shaughnessy, Director of US Immigration and Naturalisation, withdrawing her application and which we published recently (*Erica Mann, Briefe und Antworten*, Munich, 1984).

Lastly, throughout his life Gründgens kept close watch to ensure that his first name was spelt with the "f", a form he had adopted at the beginning of his acting career.
BERTHOLD SPANENBERG.
Eilermann Verlag, Bäumlstrasse 6, 8000 Munich 9.

Enigma: The Polish Contribution

Sir, - Zara Steiner's review of *The Missing Dimension*, edited by Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (October 12), refers briefly to the assistance derived by the United Kingdom's Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) from the breaking of Enigma by the Poles between 1933 and 1939. The Poles handed over the results of their work to GC&CS in July and August 1939.

Conflicting opinions have been published by former members of GC&CS, including Professor F. H. Hinsley, about the value of the Polish contribution to GC&CS's work on Enigma. Hinsley suggests, in his *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, that the Poles advanced that work by a mere seven months. That assessment was made on the basis that Enigma rotors were recovered from U-33 (which was sunk on February 12, 1940). However, Marian Rejewski, the Polish cryptanalyst principally responsible for breaking Enigma, has pointed out one fatal flaw (there are others) in that approach: only three rotors were recovered from the crew of U-33 but army and air force Enigma used five rotors, all of which were needed by GC&CS and supplied by the Poles.

Gordon Welchman, former head of Hut 6 (army and air force Enigma) at GC&CS and, with Alan Turing, architect of the powerful British bombs which were used to find the keys used by Enigma nets, has for a variety of convincing reasons said that without the Poles "Hut 6 Ultra would never have gotten off the ground". Unfortunately, he does not refer to Hinsley's U-33 hypothesis.

Finally, Peter Calvocoressi, in a letter to *The Times* (March 23, 1984) has claimed that "according to the best qualified judges, [the Polish contribution] accelerated the British breaking of Enigma by perhaps a year". Although he was head of the air force section in Hut 3 at GC&CS, he is clearly giving not his own opinion - presumably he was referring to the view of former GC&CS cryptanalysts. However, without some evidence to support the claim, it

cannot carry much weight, especially since so few people at GC&CS knew about the Polish work. As late as 1982, even Welchman thought that the Poles had stolen rotors IV and V, whereas it is clear that they recovered their wiring cryptanalytically. Professor Jack Good, who worked at GC&CS under Alan Turing from May 1941 to October 1943, heard the Poles mentioned only once by Turing. It was an "cycloper" for him when he learnt about their achievement in 1981. And Calvocoressi makes no reference to the factors stressed by Welchman as having been important to Hut 6's successes.

A strong Polish cryptanalytical team, including Rejewski, worked at Uzes, near Avignon, from the autumn of 1940 until the invasion of Vichy France by the Germans in November 1942. Five members of that team, with knowledge of the Polish (and probably the British) ability to break Enigma, were arrested and questioned by the Gestapo in March 1943. Colonel Gwido Langer, Major Maksymilian Ciezkli, Lieutenant Antoni Palluth and civilians named Edward Fokczynski and Gaca were then sent to concentration camps, where Palluth and Fokczynski died. It is to their eternal credit that none can have revealed anything about their work, since Enigma was the Allies' main source of intelligence during the war against Germany.

It is therefore a matter for regret that the debt owed to the Poles is the subject of conflicting claims and, especially, that the official history is wrong in its assessment in Volume 1. Perhaps the time is ripe for an authoritative evaluation of the Polish contribution to GC&CS's work on Enigma.

T. R. ERSKINE.
25 Hawthorn Road, Belfast.

Plato and Lesbianism

Sir, - Your correspondent Alistair Elliot (October 26) is probably correct in adducing Anacreon fr 358 (*Poetae Melici Graeci*) as an example of a classical Greek literary work containing mention of the possibility of a woman entertaining erotic feelings towards someone of her own sex. It should be noted, however, that in classical antiquity as any rate Lesbianism in its modern sense was not expressed by any word connected with the island of Lesbos. The Lesbian vice was called: *lesbiazo* (and its alternative *lesbizo*) is used of the partner in that act who accepts the penis in his or her mouth. I am therefore puzzled by Mr Elliot's second paragraph in which he connects that verb with the generosity shown by Lesbian women in applying their (homo-erotic) discoveries to men.

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AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Baldick is the author of *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932*, 1983.
Elizabeth Barker's books include *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*, 1976.
Anthony Birley's most recent book is *The Fall of Roman Britain*, 1981.
Roger Coote is a Research Fellow at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Oxford.
Jonathan Culler's books include *On Deconstruction* and *Barthes*, both 1983.
Isabel Emmett is a lecturer in Society at the University of Manchester.
Lewis L. Gould's books include *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*, 1982.
Ian Hamilton's biography, *Robert Lowell*, was published last year.
Tim Hilton is the author of the catalogue to the exhibition *Picasso's Picasso*, 1981.
Graham Hough's *The Mystery Religion of W. B. Yeats* was published earlier this year.
Irving Kristol is Professor of Social Thought at the Graduate School of Business, New York University.
Patrick McCarthy is the author of *Camus: A critical study of his life and work*, 1982.
John McElreath is the author of *Against Criticism*, 1982.
Peter Marshall is Professor of American History at the University of Manchester.
James Mathers is an honorary lecturer in Pastoral Studies at the University of Birmingham.
Kenneth O. Morgan's *Labour in Power, 1945-1951*, was published earlier this year.
David Nokes is a lecturer in English at King's College, London.
Wendy Dunbar O'Flaherty's books include *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology*, 1978.
Ben Pimlott is editor of *Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought*, which was published earlier this month.
Roy Porter is a lecturer at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London.
Peter Redgrove's latest collection of poems, *The Working of Water*, will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.
Sir James Richards's books include *The National Trust Book of English Architecture*, 1981.
Alan Ryan's *Property and Political Theory* will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.
Andrew Salt is Architectural Editor of *The Survey of London*.
A. N. Sherwin-White's books include *Roman Foreign Policy in the East 168 BC to AD 1*, 1983.
Susan Strasser is Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics.
David Summers's *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* was published in 1982.
Anthony Thwaite's *Poems 1933-1983* was published earlier this year.
E. S. Turner's *An ABC of Nohanga* was published in September.
Alan Webster is Dean of St. Paul's.
Hugh Young writes a political column in *The Guardian*.

Basil Blackwell

Puns
W.D. REDFERN

Puns are traditionally the lowest form of wit. This book asks us to think twice about their place in our lives and our culture. It is at different moments an analysis, a history and an anthology of puns. It collects and dissects them in literature, and finds them too in popular culture, the visual arts, in graffiti, in slips of the tongue, in dreams, clichés and proverbs, and in advertising.
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John Coates

COMMENTARY

Sublime answers to basic questions

Tim Hilton

Henri Matisse: Sculptures and drawings
Hayward Gallery, until January 6
JOHN ELDERFIELD

The Drawings of Henri Matisse
311pp. Thames and Hudson. £16.
0500 234019

ISABELLE MONOD-FONTAINE
The Sculpture of Henri Matisse
160pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.50.
0500 234000

MICHAEL P. MEZZATESTA
Henri Matisse, Sculptor/Painter: A formal
analysis of selected works
143pp. Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum.
£18.50.

0912804157
PIERRE SCHNEIDER
Matisse

752pp. Thames and Hudson. £75.
0500 091668

NICHOLAS WATKINS
Matisse
240pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £25.
07148 20385

The Hayward Gallery has seldom looked lovelier than it does at the moment, for it is filled with drawing and sculpture by Matisse. The beauties of the exhibition are not quite the expected ones. Those aspects of Matisse's work which gave him a reputation as a virtuoso of line, or made Roger Fry call him the "master of modern rococo", are not to the fore. We find a much more difficult and demanding artist: we also find a master sculptor. It is one of those exhibitions that change public consciousness of an artist far more effectively than any book could do. None the less it is accompanied by a very good book. The 150 drawings that John Golding has selected are discussed in a long, deeply appreciative essay by John Elderfield

and are listed with informative catalogue notes by Magdalena Dubrowski. The principles of the selection are clear. Golding's brief introduction says that the drawings were chosen "primarily because of their strength and beauty, and to illustrate the various phases of his long career". But the very quality of the exhibition inevitably leads one to matters that are not so neatly explained: Golding also makes the claim that Matisse is "one of the greatest draughtsmen of all times".

He makes no attempt (I think correctly) to substantiate this judgment. How, in any case, would he compare Matisse's drawings with those of Renaissance artists, who had vastly different purposes, or with drawings of other cultures? It is almost a principle of connoisseurship that we cannot do this. Yet Golding's conviction is surely just, and Elderfield's essay goes some way towards demonstrating that, at the least, Matisse must be considered in such terms. To do so, Elderfield changes the ground. Though constrained by the nature of his publication, a commentary on the exhibition, his ambitious preoccupation is with the nature of drawing itself. His last book, *The Modern Drawing*, showed how often twentieth-century art raises this question, which may indeed be specific to modernism; and he now concentrates on the way that Matisse applies himself to basic concerns and extracts from them the most elevated results. Seen from this point of view, a major comparison is inevitable. Picasso's drawing, superb though it is, begins to appear only a marvel of pretence and contrivance. A sign of Matisse's greatness is that he gives sublime answers to fundamental questions. He begins with the mundane problems of the studio — a student, a sheet of paper, a plaster cast — and finds in something akin to mysticism.

Thus, the exhibition opens with a sheet from a drawing class, an *académie* of 1891-2. Though the task was routine, the drawing has a high competence — not like the chilling competence of Picasso's art school drawings three or four years later — that naturally turns into the tender surfaces and lighting of the charcoal and estompe "Standing Nude Model" of 1900. Matisse was both an assiduous student and an artist gifted beyond patience. If the exhibition accelerates his early development, little harm

is done. The first room of the installation thrillingly describes the way he took on a masterful self-expression. This was at the time of his divisionist and fauve paintings. Not many drawings were made during Matisse's fauve period, but here are two that look to Van Gogh's ability to dispense with tonal modelling and animate the whole surface of his sheet with discrete but rhythmic marks. This has an obvious bearing on the manner of fauve paintings, when Matisse became truly a radical artist. But Elderfield is concerned to establish a more vital affiliation, which would be with Cézanne. The "Standing Nude" of 1901-3, he argues, pursues to an extreme that tendency in Cézanne in which line (the first, and conceptual, component of drawing) and shading (its illusionistic means) shed or disavowed their



Matisse's "Standing Nude", 1901-03.

separate functions. In the Matisse, the vigorous, dark, wet hatching of the reed pen, outside the contours of the model's body, depicts that body through the absence of a defining line: the body is white paper, the drawing is mainly in movements of the pen that do not define the drawing's subject. The model's pose is, as it were, complementary: it is that of someone blinded by sudden illumination. But this is not Elderfield's point. The modernity of the drawing, he writes, was that "the medium of art was exposed along with the artist's sensibility". Problems were therefore raised for an artist whose constant desire was to preserve the whole image of the human figure. Matisse now looked to sculpture (and nearly all of his sculpture is of the figure) to clarify his attitude to these problems; and the way that he did so is perhaps the major theme of this exhibition.

Golding's and Elderfield's selection shows how persistent was Matisse's desire to test himself. Although he might on occasion applaud spontaneity in drawing, his real ambitions took the form of a quest, a searching deliberation. The notion of Matisse as an "effortless" draughtsman, which was always based on his line, must now be finally abandoned. Elderfield bluntly says that it was in line drawing that Matisse most often failed. One of the first of the "pure" drawings of this type is a telling contribution to the exhibition. "Marguerite Reading", made in Collioure in 1906, is a portrait of Matisse's daughter. The drawing accompanies the fauve painting "La Lecture" and the sculpture "Standing Nude", for which this adolescent girl was also the model. The drawing, like the sculpture, is a calmer companion of the inflammatory painting. It is very thoughtful and quite physical. One almost feels that in some strokes the pen might have been pushed rather than drawn. The sheet is the record of a powerful meditation. So is a contemporary drawing, though in comparison it has less emotional effect, of a reclining man seen from the back; I think this must have been connected with sculpture in some way. It was one of the last male nudes in Matisse's art, and the examination of Marguerite was one of the last significant pen drawings for some years. Until 1919 the drawings are mainly in pencil and charcoal. They are, for that reason, softer, more manual, and (to take the metaphor from

sculpture, as we should) more akin to modelling than to carving. At this point Matisse's procedures begin to allow revision and erasure. But such revisions are allowed to be visible and in fact represent the strength of the drawing, or rather help to convey its strength. The majestic "Girl with Tulips" (1910) is of Jeanne Vadein, who in the next few years would be the model for the "Jeannette" sculptures. Its intellectual gravity is in every movement of the charcoal, and these same touches show the gradual re-ordering of the drawing. It is a sheet in which one senses not only the passing of time but further and more sensitive thought, all tending towards a single image. In this sense it is symbolic of Matisse's aspirations for his art. Elderfield thinks that it illustrates a remark of Matisse's in the last year of his life, one of the paradoxical revelations of his great age. "This image is revealed to me as though each stroke of charcoal erased from the glass some of the mist which until then had prevented me from seeing it."

"Girl with Tulips" inaugurates a period in which the power of Matisse's drawing is conveyed by the webs and veils of this kind of deliberation. The weightiness of the drawings derives partly from enlargement of scale, partly from an infrastructure which we deduce as much as experience, but mostly from the increased final pressure of crayon and charcoal on the paper: the more pronounced lines are like a triumphant and indisputable end of meditation. One is tempted to call this a "metaphysical" period in the drawing. These years have often been known as the experimental part of Matisse's career, because of the severe and introspective dissimilarity of his contemporary paintings. But the sequence of drawings gives continuity and wholeness to the time when Matisse most responded to the "methods of modern construction", by which he meant Cubism; and the painful renewals and innovations of his work on canvas seem the more natural when considered in the light of his work on paper. The studies of Yvonne Landsberg, of whom Matisse made an intractable oil portrait, both accompany and postdate the pointing because drawing's function was also to reconsider and confirm its difficult inventions. But in one instance, I believe, drawing went beyond any conceivable expression in another medium. The portrait of the violinist Eva Moducci is the most breath-taking drawing in the exhibition. It is in a strict sense incomparable: the canons by which we might judge it seem not to exist. No other drawing takes us quite so far from the conventions of draughtsmanship, but it is inescapably a major work of art. Perhaps the extremity of the Moducci portrait had something to do with Matisse's return to a more normal kind of drawing after the First World War. Elderfield very properly relates the "Plumed Hat" drawings of the model Antoinette to the *rappel à l'ordre*, the conservative neo-classicism of those years.

With the appearance of odissees in sumptuous rooms, Matisse's exoticism added much to the northern and protestant genre of the interior. This was made even richer by the French orientalist tradition. Elderfield goes on to argue that Matisse now created "a kind of bourgeois pastoral: of pastoral nudes, transported to decorative interiors, whose very decoration mimics and idealizes that of the outside world, just as the pastoral landscape does real landscape". The danger was that this would become only a *petit bonheur*, and certainly Matisse could become over-reliant in Nice. But the Hayward exhibition now becomes very precise. The selection is unflattering. It also points to the way that, after the end of the decade, Matisse took up mythological concerns that helped him return to the amplitude and grandeur of his "great decorations" of 1907-9. The 1935 "Faun and Nymph" was a reaction to the *Odyssée* prompted by a commission to illustrate *Ulysse*. Six years later it had become one of the largest of Matisse's drawings, in charcoal on a six-foot canvas, with a tyral-like presence and authority.

In comparison to such endeavours, there seems to be something unassuming about Matisse's sculpture. It has often been treated as the work of an artist more fully

engaged elsewhere. The Hayward exhibition must dispel this view. The sculptures have a peculiar self-sufficiency, are reserved rather than modest and on certain occasions are wonderfully radical. These are aesthetic objects, and not merely because they are works of art. They turn away from nineteenth-century demands that sculpture should engage with the world of reality. Their disavowal of public effect becomes an insistence on their own nature. Here is one reason for the smallness of their actual dimensions. They are frankly, almost declaratively, the size of objects not only made by hand but made to fit the hand. Paradoxically, this assists to give them a visual distance not common in previous sculpture: they appear as though the spectator is further removed from them than he knows to be physically the case. Even the four "Back" sculptures, which are seven feet high, do not appear to be large in terms of public sculpture: they too confirm the privacy and openness to the tactile which characterize all Matisse's three-dimensional work.

Matisse made a total of sixty-nine sculptures, and the Hayward exhibition has gathered practically all of them. They are bronzes that were made in editions (often posthumously) from the clay and plaster figures that Matisse liked to keep about his home and delighted to include, as part of a still-life or a studio interior, in his painting. The installation uses two floors of the gallery to give a well-judged pace to the works that were made between 1900 and 1909 (half of Matisse's output), then to the productive period of 1929-30, and to the few pieces that were made during the last twenty years of his life. There are of course numerous points where the sculpture and drawing installations overlap, to their mutual enhancement. But the sculpture forms a major exhibition in its own right, and is as experience that is not likely to be repeated in our lifetime. It is the more disappointing, therefore, that Isabelle Monod-Fontaine's book is so brief, and its catalogue of the show merely a list. The standard work on Matisse's sculpture, that by Albert Elsen, has long been unobtainable, and this is no substitute. In fact one is better equipped to study the Hayward show with the catalogue of a quite different exhibition, *Henri Matisse, Sculptor/Painter*, held at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, this summer. Its catalogue entries, by Michael Mezzatesta, summarize recent scholarship, describe the circumstances in which each of Matisse's sculptures was made and relate them to the artist's parallel ambitions in other media. Monod-Fontaine makes no attempt to do this.

Monod-Fontaine's text fails even to mention how Matisse took up the serious study of sculpture in 1899, seeking advice from Rodin and working in the studio of Rodin's pupil Bourdella. She instead begins her account with a discussion of the photographs that Matisse used for a number of his nudes of 1906-9. This is not entirely new information, but has never before been given such prominence. The photographs were taken from a publication called *Mes Modèles*. The nature of this magazine is of a little interest. Lawrence Gowing's book on Matisse (still the best short introduction to the artist) cheerfully refers to it as "a pomographic album". Monod-Fontaine writes of its "rudimentary and often almost obscene exploitation of female bodies". But to foot *Mes Modèles* is not quite like that. Although it seems not to have used professional models it is distinctively of that artistic-cum-theatrical sub-genre of photography that in the 1880s and 1890s used aesthetic props and poses to provide experience that was neither aesthetic nor quite real in any other way. The matter might not be worth lingering over, but we ought to be clear about Matisse and the nude. The formation of the photographic models is not only that of an artist, but that of a *modern* artist whose attention to the figure tends to become attention to art itself. It would have been good to have even a short discussion of the "Standing Nude" of 1906, which was modelled from Matisse's daughter Marguerite, then twelve years old, but may also be influenced by the Egyptian sculpture that Matisse admired. This surely has more human and artistic significance

than the connection with *Mes Modèles*.

An aesthetic sculptural vision is explored in the pieces that exist in series, the five "Jeannette" heads and the four "Backs". The "Jeannettes" are Matisse's major attempt at the modern portrait sculpture, and in making them Matisse found the masterpiece of his three-dimensional work. As a genre, the portrait might not seem to have wide possibilities for a modern artist. Matisse seems to have taken it to its limits; and in doing so made, in the last of the series, a sculpture more searching even than any of his whole figures. The "Backs", impressive though they are, have not the perfect invention of the heads. Because they are all from the Tate we are used to seeing these sculptures together, and for obvious reasons they belong together. Yet they have separate histories, belong to different phases of Matisse's career between 1908 and 1931, and were not in fact ever seen *en série* before the Tate acquired this set in 1956. The first of them has been the best known, for it was in Roger Fry's second Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1912 and in the Armory Show the following year. The third and fourth of the "Backs" were scarcely known until after the Second World War, and Matisse himself may have forgotten about "Back III", for it was discovered in a Nice warehouse only in 1955, after his death. The popular view of these sculptures is that they represent the process of abstraction. Although this is in one way undeniable, it is not the most significant thing about them. We ought to concentrate on the qualities of the individual works. Mezzatesta's catalogue takes them one by one, in their chronological position, and I feel that this is the correct approach. "Back I" of 1909 might be considered a slightly delayed appearance of Fauvism in sculpture, if we are to accept that the modelling is related to fauve brushwork; but it might be better considered in relation to reliefs by Rodin, Gauguin and Maillol. "Back II" (1913) and "Back III" (1916)

Thunder and lightning

Lachlan Mackinnon

The Ancient Mariner
Oliver Theatre

In this production, Michael Bogdanov takes a poem unique for its combination of narrative velocity and symbolic implication and sadly denatures it. Seeking to exploit every spectacular possibility of the original, Bogdanov relies heavily on effects of sound and lighting to woo an audience composed largely of children: the one moment at which they are fully engaged reveals the difficulties clearly. As the sailors decide that the killing of the albatross was, after all, a good thing, they celebrate by dancing, leaping or juggling, a series of turns performed on the capstan which dominates the front of the stage. At one moment, a splendidly cast strongman straightens the flukes of an anchor with his bare hands: this carelessness brings out a meaning while commanding our attention, and the sequence is deservedly applauded.

The reliance on spectacular effects of light and sound is ultimately wearisome. Thunder and lightning play over the stage in the same way too often, while the blessing of the water-snakes is let slide by almost unremarked, the flattest point in the generally disappointing second act. As the Mariner's shipmates are picked off by the splotchy authentic Death and Life-Is-Death, most of the life of the show goes with them. Basil, they sing shanties; a little uncertainly led by Josie Buckley, run up and down rigging and persuade us that we are on board ship, but, for instance, when the Pilot's boat appears, it is quite unclear whether we are meant to accept an illusion or salute the effort of theatre's weaknesses, because it is only trundled a little way out of the wings.

The intermissions of dramatic conviction is not shared by the cast. The Young Mariner, Frederick Warden, appears as a bumptious cad who deserves what he gets, and his shipmates are not so sorry that we are much bothered by their deaths. Michael Bogdanov's adapta-

tion must be thought of in connection with a painting that gave Matisse difficulty, the Art Institute of Chicago's "Bathers by a River", which was originally to have been a third panel to go with "Dance" and "Music". This is the painting in which Matisse most decisively used and overcame Cubism, turning it to his own purposes as no other artist could. When the painting was completed in 1916-17 "Back III" surely helped its resolution. To my eye, "Back III" is the finest of the group: perhaps its success is the reason why its predecessor was relegated to the warehouse. Monod-Fontaine is not clear about these relations, is mistaken in believing that "Bathers by a River" was begun in 1916-17, and has nothing at all to say about "Back IV", which (although it cannot be securely dated) is of 1929 or 1930 and is to be associated with the Barnes Foundation murals.

This is not merely to say that the sculptures fit in with the paintings of this year or that year. For, as we know from so much else in Matisse, there are recurrent themes and deep pools of experience to which he returned time and again. Sculpture for Matisse was just such a reservoir of emotion. That is the reason why it appears so often in his paintings, and why we may be sure that the occasional sculptures of his later years were none the less wholehearted, and connected with the highest purposes of his art. The "Reclining Nudes" of 1927-9 may be slightly isolated within Matisse's sculptural oeuvre; but of course there is very little of Matisse's art that is isolated in his work as a whole: and this wholeness of art — its unity throughout all media — is demonstrated not only in parallels but also in sculpture's function as a memory of the ideal. A beautiful late sculpture is the second "Venus in a Shell" of 1932, whose deep incisions and excavations are so pronounced as almost to amount to a different method of construction. Monod-Fontaine wishes to associate this piece with the four "Blue Nudes", the cut-outs of twenty

years later. This is reasonable, but she might also have pointed to some antecedents, which are numerous and instructive. In feeling, "Venus in a Shell II", is not unlike "The Two Negresses" (1908), and its carving returns us to the exploration of primitive art. I think it not unlikely that "The Two Negresses" was affected by Picasso's painting "Two Nudes" (1906), which would have been in the studio when Matisse saw the "Démolisseurs d'Avignon", and also by Picasso's attempts at carving into oak. The general point is that Matisse's sculpture swallowed cubist influences perhaps more surely than did his painting, yet he never produced cubist sculpture. Similarly, he could look quite directly at academic and Renaissance prototypes and still be making a distinctive modern art. This surely indicates that his sculpture has a tremendous scope: no other modern sculptor has such a large comprehension of the possibilities of the medium.

The very first appearance of the motif of "Venus in a Shell" may be in the little drawing for "Bonheur de Vivre" (No 22 in the Hayward, but not catalogued or illustrated: nor are other sheets in this frame, including an important drawing of the 1907 sculpture "Reclining Nude"). As we know, the late cut-outs resume and summarize Matisse's feelings for a realm of primal innocence that had first been expressed half a century earlier. The Hayward installation has two of the four "Blue Nudes" and, high on the wall, four of the six large brush and ink works executed in Nice in 1952. Elderfield writes of them as "great energetic signs — for by now it is hard to talk of them as drawings, so instantaneously stamped on their sheets of paper do they appear" and points out that such dancing figures are "the essential Symbolist sign of art's own organic unity". Thus, the cut-outs summarize the ideal of autonomous creativity so characteristic of modern art. But if Matisse belongs to the heroic years of modernity he increasingly, for that same reason, tells

Childish pranks

Peter Kemp

The South Bank Show: Joseph Heller
LWT

"Thanks a lot. That was very, very good", Melvyn Bragg enthused to Joseph Heller, his interviewee on *The South Bank Show*, as the credits rolled. "They say that all the time", Heller quipped in response. "Then when I see it on screen, they've cut me down to two-and-a-half minutes." After the preceding hour, you could see their point. In Heller's case, it turned out, the style — of laxly prolix books from *Catch-22* to his own novel, *God Knows* — is very much the man. In speech, as on paper, he's verbose.

Partly because of this wordiness, less than might have been expected emerged about his life and work during *The South Bank Show*'s profile. Most of Heller's fiction, indeed, was virtually ignored. But the programme wasn't without its bonuses. Besides acquainting you with the expansive personality behind the garrulous books — which, as Heller grinningly acknowledged, have often been made to sound "much much more intelligent and erudite than they really are" — it supplied some helpful insights into his latest work. *God Knows*, as Heller explained, is an extended monologue in which King David, seventy years old and all passion spent, reminisces about his life. The author's play for enlivening this and making it "meaningful today" is to endow his King of the Jews with the voice of a contemporary New York Jew. As David speaks, Biblical phrases are gamely scrambled with bits of Yiddish, slang, and casual obscenities.

Questioned as to the book's genesis, Heller proved untypically unforthcoming: "The why or how I can't guess". "I do not know how or why." What was odd about this was that the answer seemed rascally slyly all around him. For the interview took place on Coney Island — famous before the war, as Jewishly, not just for its fun-fair, but also for its Jewish community. It was here that Heller spent his

of things we have lost. For instance, he is (with Picasso and Miró) the last great artist to be a "whole" artist, and the last whom we can confidently associate with poetry. More and more, it seems, we are required to look back on the avant-garde period as a golden age in itself, recoverable only through learning — and exhibitions such as this one.

Pierre Schneider's new book on Matisse has primarily a physical — optical, rather — impact, though it is also a learned work. The Matisse literature is very large, but books about his work as a whole are all rather short. They also use the same few dozen paintings to illustrate his career. Schneider changes this, for his book contains more than 900 illustrations, a large proportion of which are in colour. Furthermore, many works are reproduced for the first time. One can look through the book and find wonderful paintings of whose existence one had no idea. For these reasons it is the most complete book on the artist yet published, and immediately becomes indispensable. Schneider's text draws on an immense knowledge both of private collections and of the Matisse archives. It is arranged in overlapping chapters that follow a broadly chronological path but are also thematic. Schneider allows himself many an opportunity to pause and reflect, with the result that the book feels more like a compilation of all his thoughts about Matisse than an argument. Sometimes his judgments will seem rather outlandish to those who are accustomed to the plainer procedures of English-language art history. In the "Red Studio" of 1911, for instance, "the monochrome coating adheres to the picture plane like Nessus' coat of fire". This refers to a legend of Hercules. I began to find such remarks rather agreeable, perhaps in reaction to Nicholas Watkins's well-balanced guide. This is an introduction which is evidently written for students and, just as evidently, assumes that students have simple and mechanical minds.

childhood. And as he strolled past the carousels talking of synagogues, *God Knows*, with its mingling of the Jewish and the jaunty, fell into perspective. Attempting to give bezzaz to the Bible, the book, it appears, springs from two aspects of Heller's youth.

This perhaps explains its sometimes puerile humour ("Man's erections are only temporary" and the like). Reinforcing his hypothesis was a contribution from a genial corybille as "Childhood Friend". His speciality as a boy, he revealed — "I was heavy on the comedy element in the Bible" — had been to raise a laugh by sending up the scriptures. Always reliably risible, he'd found, was David's threat that "All that pisseth against the wall should not breathe again". Heller had been much entertained by this, his friend recalled, and "I think he used it in his book".

He did, and supplemented it with abundant material of a similar calibre — as dramatized extracts from *God Knows* performed by David Suchet brought out. Though never looking sufficiently decrepit, Suchet gave a fine vocal performance, skilfully investing the lines with as much tonal range as he could. But — in what seemed a tacit recognition of the book's rambling and repetitive quality — it was noticeable that the extracts had been lopped and streamlined to give an impression of faster movement than is actually the case. Movement of another kind was incorporated too — again presumably to offset the static nature of the material. Although, as Heller insisted on the programme, "My David never gets out of bed", Suchet — in search of some variety to alleviate the book's sameness of effect — wandered down corridors, lit lamps, and stood gazing out through arches into a Palestinian twilight loud with crickets. Putting together his jocular saga, Heller remarked, "was a lot of fun for me", adding that he felt it would be "a lot of fun for most of the readers". This programme's interview endorsed the first claim, but its samples from the novel never convinced you about the second.

God Knows is reviewed on page 1330.

John Coates

Naturalizing the Incarnation

David Summers

LEO STEINBERG
The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion
222pp. Faber. £25.
0571 13924

Although equipped with the customary scholarly apparatus, Leo Steinberg's *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* is not addressed just to scholars. It is written with urgency, combativeness and flair and was first published as an issue of the critical journal *October*. But the suggestion of sensational content in the book's title, presentation and promotion is for the most part misleading. The address to a broad audience is not only commercial but also educational. The text itself is a very serious essay.

Professor Steinberg argues that the display of the genitalia of Christ in Renaissance works of art is intimately linked to the incarnational theology of the period, and that this display, which might be thought to be incidental to the nudity displaying the full humanity of Christ, is a deeply significant theme in its own right, a theme in which the paradox of the Christian God-man is most powerfully and poignantly set forth. The essay in which he advances this argument is relatively brief, only slightly more than half of the volume. Nearly equal space is given over to forty excursions, some of which retrace or criss-cross the themes treated in the text proper, and others of which add corroborating opinions, evidence, or vigorous replies to objections. These pages also provide the opportunity for the doubling of the number of supporting illustrations.

The book represents the most recent stage in a campaign Steinberg has been waging since 1967, when, in an essay called "Objectivity and the Shrinking Self", he surveyed what he took to be the sorry state of the study of art history. He objected not so much to the questions art historians ask, or even to the seriously tight protocols that govern the acceptable answers to these questions, as to the questions they do not ask. For one thing, they do not ask about sexuality, an especially large blind spot for a group concerned mostly with Western art, in which the nude and expressive modes of the human body have been sources of the most enduring themes and deeply held values.

Between that essay and this book, Steinberg has broadened his diagnosis, adding the bad influence of the demythologizing theology of Rudolf Bultmann to the institutionalized prudishness of professional art history. Bultmann argues that the Christian revelation was set out in mythical language meaningful to an earlier age but not to ours, and that this language must be dismantled and restated in Heideggerian terms: it is to be truly experienceable in the present age. For Steinberg, this theology is simply the final iteration of Christian myth and, more generally, an impoverishment of human feeling and meaning; Christ has become on such a view "all doctrine and message", at the same time as the value of images of Christ has been reduced to cash value; and their celebrative beauty to the disengaged beauty of art.

When Steinberg writes of the "modern oblivion" of Christ's sexuality, he does not mean the outright censoring of images in which Christ's genitalia are prominently displayed; there are examples of such censoring, many images of the nude Christ have survived. Rather, he argues, we have simply come to ignore these images, we are for some reason anesthetized against them, and so are blind to some of the deepest mysteries, meanings and consolations of our own tradition.

In a book with such a title one might expect psychologues of one dialect or another, but Steinberg rejects any such approach; using instead basic art-historical procedures, gathering an "archive" of Renaissance images wherein the emphasis on the genitalia of Christ is assertive and central, an archive that, he tells us, "runs near a thousand" (about a quarter of which are illustrated). These images are sorted and analysed in various categories, such as the erotic "chin-chuck", the *ostentatio* motif and the motif of maternal protection, the blood-hypnotic, the enhanced loin-cloth of self-touching. This analysis is related to Christian

literature concerning Christ's genitalia, most of it concerning the circumcision. Steinberg's reasons for such a display of art-historical resources, are certainly at least in part polemical. I, he seems to be saying, have a *thousand* Renaissance images in which the genitalia of Christ are featured, images that can be grouped in significant ways, and you are all trying to explain Renaissance art by quarrelling over the textual sources of Botticelli's "Primavera".

Steinberg has written a number of studies in which he has explored the tangled sexual metaphorical language in which Christian theology has set out the relation between Christ and the Virgin Mary, and the relation of this language to visualization. Here again, Christ and the Virgin are never far apart, and Christ's nudity, the precondition for the display of his sex, occurs in scenes of his early youth and of the Passion, scenes where the



"Madonna and Child with Donor" by Giovanni Cariani, 1520, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

Virgin is very frequently involved. The circumcision of Christ, as his first shedding of blood and annihilation of his Passion, was one of the sorrows of the Virgin, and it is not difficult to imagine that the nudity of the Christ child, which became a major theme in fourteenth-century art, was not just an instance of what Steinberg calls his "humanation" but also a foreshadowing of the Passion, when Christ was stripped of his clothing. The body of Christ is the very paradox of the God-man, and this paradox is stated all the more emphatically by the insistence upon his genitalia.

Other scholars have pointed to the importance of incarnational theology for late Medieval and Renaissance art. Gerhart Lader argued, for example, that the Incarnation provided a major justification for the making of images in a tradition that had good reason—indeed a divine commandment—not to make images at all, and that the theology of the Incarnation governed the development of naturalism in late medieval art and the complex transformation of the relation of viewer and image this naturalism entailed. The main instructional vehicle of incarnational theology was the literature and imagery of religious devotion, whose imagery provides the basis for much of Steinberg's argument. So, for example, he argues that the intimate gestures of Christ and the Virgin are not to be understood simply as engaging genre motifs, but point beyond themselves to a higher meaning. What he calls the "chin-chuck", the touching of the chin of one figure by another, is a sign of a positively spiritual greeting and, as the book opens, the fondling of the genitalia of Christ is seen as a sign of Christ's humanity. In its very intimacy a sign of the rebirth of man and the vulnerability of God.

The formulation of the imagery of religious devotion required a considerable amount of pictorial invention. The sacred stories were amplified in order to make them more vivid and in order to smooth emotional entry into their significance. Steinberg is, however, at pains to insist that although they are, in most cases, perfectly orthodox in meaning, the images with which he is concerned are not

simply illustrations of theological ideas, but inventions whose meanings are embraced by such ideas. While they usually obey a decorum set by theology, they do not simply make words into pictures. Except for the circumcision, Christian theology is silent on the subject of Christ's genitalia, and utterances concerning the subject are overwhelmingly pictorial. It was the painters who had to devise the specific visual conventions demanded by more general theological meanings. Steinberg takes the position that the pictures are therefore themselves primary texts, and the "truths [of theology] I have recited were extrapolated from them as their precondition". On such a view, when an angel in a Madonna by Botticelli sprinkles Christ's genitalia with flowers, this is an invention by the painter that gives uniquely pictorial meaning to the doctrine of the Incarnation. The same principle might be extended to all of Steinberg's themes.

Iconographers are in the habit of trying to

fact that art itself is a way in which meaning is invented, maintained and developed. It is the exploration of this last possibility that leads to some of the book's finest pages. Christ's gesture of covering his genitals in death, a gesture repeated by the Virgin in certain Pietàs and by God the Father in the so-called Throne of Grace, is followed by a remarkable closing meditation on metaphors of divinity and human sexuality. Citing James Joyce—avoiding the psychologists to the end—Steinberg explains God's final protective gesture not as modesty but as the breaking of the deepest taboo of sexual contact between fathers and sons, and thus as a sign of unspeakable and therefore divine reconciliation. Again, such an interpretation arises from the explication of a pictorial motif, under the umbrella of more general meaning, and not from the treatment of a single image.

Similar argumentation also brings us around to the pages on Christ's erection. Throughout his book, Steinberg respects the long tradition of the sexual purity of Christ, the New Adam who, though without concupiscence, is perfect in all his parts, as God created man, without shame or the need of shame. Christ's "sexuality" is not like fallen human sexuality. But there is a series of images in which, it is argued, Christ's penis appears to be erect. There is no theological basis for such a state of affairs, and only Boccaccio is added, to the point that erection and resurrection could be coupled, if only in jest. Still, in an age in which the conspicuous copulence was a sign of power and the genitalia of Christ a sign of humanity, it is to unthinkable, Steinberg asks, that painters might have availed themselves of these signs?

He notes that Lazarus in Sebastiano del Piombo's "Resurrection of Lazarus" shows beneath his loin-cloth "a sign of resurgent flesh"—an erection. In such an argument, in which there is no appeal to be made outside the image itself, you either see what is being talked about or you don't. The "Resurrection of Lazarus" is not illustrated, and the examples of erection in images of the infant Christ will be more convincing to some readers than to others. The most outstanding examples are bulging loin-cloths in a series of paintings of the Man of Sorrows by Maerten van Heemskerck. If similarly bulging draperies were painted for other figures by Maerten van Heemskerck, or if such treatment was simply a quirk of his style—always timescent to my eye—it was not clear; indeed, it was repeated, and so must be accounted for. In justification of this conception, which Steinberg calls "shocking", Heemskerck "could have said, or thought", that, since the circumcision began the Passion, and since according to a certain tradition the circumcision prefigures the Resurrection, an erection might also be the appropriate symbol of Christ's victory over death. He considers this pictorial-theological speculation of Heemskerck to be finally a "failure of art", never repeated, in contrast to the success of the "enhanced loin-cloth" of Christ on the Cross, an invention he attributes to Rogier van der Weyden, which elaborately celebrates what it conceals, "decantly" crying Christ's most intimate humanity in "a fanfare of cosmic triumph".

The argument seems at times almost a convert's advocacy of the mystery of the Incarnation, and Steinberg seems sometimes to evoke a timeless, untheological Catholicism. But he is not just evoking the past, rather he is holding the experience of the art of the past up to the present he finds lacking. He is most concerned both with "modern oblivion" and with Christ's sexuality in so far as they represent something broader. It is the greatest mystery that the Word was not enough, and that it became flesh. The word did not simply replicate itself, but became another thing, an image, and did not simply find illustration in doing so, but moved into another essential realm of human meaning. It is finally toward this that Steinberg points us, toward a not so much aesthetic as somatic significance, which he has explored elsewhere in his brilliant essays on Picasso. His book is only incidentally a plea for a new look at Renaissance art; it should also be read as a plea for an understanding of art in general, far from the bodiless, verbal art history and criticism of our own time.

The last, and for Steinberg clearly the most important, implication of his sermons is that in order to explain continuities of motifs we must look at images clearly and closely, taking what we see seriously and acknowledging the

Preparing for the boom

Susan Strange

ALAN S. MILWARD
The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51
527pp. Methuen. £25.
041636320

Alan S. Milward is widely — and justly — regarded as one of the half-dozen leading economic historians of our time. To the long list of his earlier works of distinction he has now added one that is rather more contentious, though no less scholarly. It is inspired by a strong, almost passionate, discontent with some of the orthodox interpretations of the postwar economic reconstruction of Western Europe and, in particular, the relationship between the Americans and the Europeans. As Professor Milward explains at the beginning, the project started as a history of the great economic boom of the 1950s and 60s — "that unique, ugly and triumphant experience . . . which changed so utterly the scope of human existence and expectations as well as the consciousness of the people of Western Europe". But it soon turned into an investigation of why and how that post-war boom had started; and at this point the author encountered what he came to believe were over-simplified, biased and misleading interpretations which he felt bound to refute with the archival ammunition recently opened to economic historians.

These misinterpretations came from two sources: from the Americans, who took too

much credit for having masterminded the recovery of Europe; and from the enthusiastic disciples of European union, who took too much credit for having diverted history in a totally new course. To the extent that these alternative versions of the story are both over-simple and widely and uncritically believed, Milward has done a very necessary and serious job of historical revision. The only question for the reviewer is whether his angry discontent has not led him, in turn, to overstate somewhat the revisionist case.

The study, and the argument, begins with the crisis of 1947. That year was misrepresented by Will Clayton and the US State Department as one in which the European economies were on the verge of collapse. Nonsense, says Milward. It was not that the efforts of European governments to rebuild their war-shattered economies were failing but rather that they were succeeding. Great efforts had been made to get industry going again and a major reason for the yawning deficit with the United States was that this effort necessitated, for lack of any alternative, very heavy purchases of capital goods from America: "The economic crisis of 1947 which ended dollar-sterling convertibility and produced the European Recovery Programme was not caused by the deteriorating domestic economic situation of the western European economies. Even less was it attributable to an impending moral, political and spiritual collapse . . . It was caused by the widening gap in the first six months of

1947 between increasing imports and increasing exports."

Milward's economic analysis is perfectly right. But it is a hollow victory because the situation was misrepresented by Clayton and the State Department not because they misunderstood the economic facts but because they had an overriding political purpose which made it necessary to get Congress to go along with a major change in US foreign economic policy. Milward himself is aware of this. "The ultimate purposes of the Marshall Plan", he writes, "were almost entirely political albeit that its mechanisms were almost entirely economic." And it represented, as he says, a change in the balance of power with the American bureaucracy in which the State Department reasserted its pre-eminence over the Treasury. He does not add that it was able to do so not simply because Morgenthau's place had been taken by Vinson and Hull's by Acheson but because events in Europe were making it clear that the United States would have to assert itself far more actively if it was to maintain its international position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

This was something the Europeans perceived very clearly. Quite unlike the situation in 1919-20, they knew that this time the United States had made a deliberate, bipartisan, credible, long-term commitment to maintaining international order after the war. It was the commitment, therefore, that made it a reasonable political risk for the European governments, including Britain, to indulge in a kind of economic brinkmanship in 1947. It is quite true, as Milward argues, that there was no domestic economic crisis, but there was an imminent financial crisis in that the reserves were nearing exhaustion and the Americans would have to act quickly if the Europeans were to avoid deflation, bringing the recovery to a screeching stop.

It is the middle chapters of the book, on the origins of the Marshall Aid programme, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and the European Payments Union (EPU), which make the best reading. Here is to be found the pay-dirt from hard digging in the records of all the major countries concerned — though more in Europe than America. Where there are weaknesses in the conclusions Milward draws from this record it is never for lack of expertise in economic history *per se*; but in occasional failure to take the political dimension, international or domestic, fully into account.

For instance, Milward draws from the chapter which he entitles "The Depoliticisation of the OEEC", and which is full of fascinating detail from official papers, the conclusion that this was a great failure for the United States because it had to abandon its original plan to allocate aid through the OEEC, which thereafter became "emasculated". In the context of the international and domestic politics of the time, this seems an oddly dismissive interpretation. True, the vaulting American ambition to bring about the rapid political integration of

Western Europe through Marshall Aid was disappointed. Yet in the long run the "emasculated" OEEC proved a brilliant device for getting the Europeans to agree on an allocation while reserving special powers to the United States through the bilateral discussions with each government regarding the use of counter-part funds. A more autocratic organization would not have lasted half so well nor given the Americans so continuing and effective an influence over European economic policies. The contrast between American success through the OEEC and the total failure of the Soviet Union to devise and impose an effective multilateral trade and payments system on Eastern Europe is striking.

Similarly, it seems to this reviewer, the domestic political background — in the Labour Party especially — to Cabinet discussions of Bevin's idea in 1948 for a European Customs Union are seriously underplayed. So is the state of public opinion among Saarlanders when the French, negotiating a convention for their future in early 1950, insisted on keeping for themselves the administration of the coal-mines. The sharpness of the German reaction is noted but the connection between this and the Schuman proposals as a means of healing a dangerous breach does not come out very clearly. Unlike Dick Gardner in his classic study, *Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy* (1956), Milward seldom supplements the official documents with a selective use of newspaper files to indicate the state of public opinion.

Throughout the study, his irritation with the uncritical canonization of Jean Monnet and his disciples is very apparent. The movement towards integration, he rightly says, has too often been portrayed as "human idealism fortunately triumphing over the narrow anachronistic realism of national governments". The truth, as always, was more complex. And though he several times dismisses the mythologizing, yet at other times he himself admits that the "wider and greater aspirations behind the Franco-German reconciliation were a necessary condition for diplomatic success".

Rather more effective hatchet-jobs are done in quiet aides on the British bureaucracy ("whenever their gaze switched to the longer term their comments were marked by rambling and alarmingly ignorant self-indulgence"); and on American political scientists like Karl Deutsch and Ernest Haas. But then such rather simplistic efforts at theorizing are easy targets. They were never taken seriously by some other academics — Raymond Aron, Alfred Grosser and Stanley Hoffman, for instance — who knew a bit more political and economic history. All the same, it is good clean fun, and for most of the time Milward presents his story in clear and colourful prose, particularly enlivened by some nice — and sometimes rather sharp — mini-biographical footnotes on the players. Since the book will be used for reference purposes as well as out of interest in the conclusions drawn by Professor Milward it is a pity his publishers did not see that it was provided with a better, more professional index.

Resistance-bound

Elisabeth Barker

M.R.D. FOOT
SOE: The Special Operations Executive
1940-46
280pp. BBC Publications. £8.50.
0563201932

This book is not the definitive history of SOE; it does not set out to be. The SOE documents — except for those which have found their way into the Cabinet, War Office or Foreign Office files in the Public Record Office — are still withheld from all except official historians. However, M. R. D. Foot is not acting as an official historian (as he was some years ago, for SOE in France), but is working with the BBC, first and foremost for the benefit of viewers of the recent series of television programmes on SOE and its work in five European countries and the Far East, and who want to know more and to understand better the issues at stake. Foot writes that it proved impossible to establish just what the programmes were going to cover before his book had to go to press; his aim therefore had to be to provide background for the viewer wanting to place the programmes in their context in the history of the Second World War.

In broad terms, he does this well, so far as the structure, staffing, methods of operation and political problems of SOE are concerned. There are fairly detailed accounts of its organizational development, its relations with rival (or friendly) departments, its communications and its security problems. These are enlivened by colourful anecdotes about its individual members at all levels, which add considerably to the book's vividness and readability — though the pernickety reader may sometimes wonder how much the anecdotes have been matured and enriched by the passing of the years and the creative fermentation of human memory. Also, younger readers may wonder whether it really mattered so much whether a man was an Old Etonian or a Wykehamist, or to whom his wife was related. But Foot would argue that, unconventional and open-minded as SOE may have been in its relations with foreign resistance movements, internally these things did count — and in a highly secret organization, inevitably, counted more than in more orthodox bodies. At the very least, such details will convey a sense of period.

If Foot gives his readers a lively overall picture of SOE (though, necessarily, a rather complicated and confusing one) his accounts of its work in individual countries are less satisfactory. Perhaps this is because of the practical

difficulty of aligning them with the BBC programmes which, in one or two cases, were more informative than he is. On the other hand, he does give what looks like a better-rounded and better-balanced version of SOE's great disaster — the *Engelndespiel* in Holland, in which around sixty Dutch agents sent by the British fell straight into German hands: the BBC programme left the strong impression that treachery inside SOE was the cause; Foot attributes the tragedy to incompetence — admittedly gross incompetence — along with the readiness to talk of some captured Dutch agents, a less dramatic explanation but ultimately more convincing.

Of SOE's work in France, Foot gives a relatively full account, making good use of his earlier access to the documents as official historian, along with a number of personal interviews. He also gives useful summaries of events in Poland and Czechoslovakia, which fill a gap, since these countries were not covered in the BBC series. On the other hand, the excellence of the BBC programme on Denmark made it hard for him to match it.

With the Balkans, Foot is less at home than with Western Europe. The role of SOE was different there: its men were not secret agents but "British Liaison Officers", supposed (at least in theory) to be carrying out strictly military functions in relation to already existing military groups, and normally wearing British military uniforms. (Hence the ostrich-like policy of giving them no political briefing before sending them into hopelessly complex situations in which they had to deal with bitter internal feuds or full-scale civil war.) Foot ranks SOE's effort in Yugoslavia and Greece alongside its effort in France, but does not adequately explain why so much of the scarce resources available went to these two countries, and gives the impression of underestimating the practical achievement of the resistance forces there — as also in Italy. His section on Albania also seems somewhat jejune and unbalanced. As for Romania, SOE's man, Captain Chastelain, achieved more from his prison cell in Bucharest, through his contacts both with the pro-Allied opposition and the Antonescu government, than Foot suggests. He mentions a big SOE black market success in the Far East, but does not record SOE's financing of its Dabue operations in 1940-41 by black market dealings.

However, SOE was, of its nature, a highly controversial entity, so it is right that Foot's book should also often be controversial. It is above all stimulating if at times — no doubt deliberately — provocative.

Saturday December 1 – Sunday December 2 10.30–5.00 pm

CROSSING THE CHANNEL

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£4 per day, £7.50 for two days. Bookings and full details from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London SW1.

(748)

The economics of learned journals

Nigel Cross

Journals are the visible fabric of the ivory tower, they are also the foundation of a multi-million dollar industry. There are tens of thousands of journals, though most university libraries are unable to take more than about 8,000 titles. Science journals are the most expensive; they are published at greater frequency and at higher prices than humanities journals, and there are more of them. Scientists deal in current knowledge, so the shelf-life of a scientific paper is short and the shelf-life of a scientific journal is long. *Biological Abstracts*, for example, grows at the rate of six feet a year at a cost of £4,000.

This kind of library arithmetic has made Mr Robert Maxwell a fortune. His Oxford-based company Pergamon Press is the biggest journal publisher in Britain. Its 350 titles turn over close to £40m a year, or nine titles per £1m. Blackwell Scientific, also of Oxford, publishes 100 journals with a turnover of £6m, or a rather more modest sixteen to seventeen titles per £1m. Robert Campbell, a director of Blackwells, has calculated that journals bring into the city of Oxford over £60m worth of business a year.

From the publisher's point of view, the beauty of journal publishing is in the elimination of cash-flow problems. Although initial investment is high — it takes from three to five years to establish a new title — the margin for error is small in comparison with book publishing. Print runs are pegged to subscriptions. A circulation of 500 is generally considered to be the bottom line. Production costs are advanced by the subscribers and banked on deposit until the printer's bill arrives. Subscription agents charge a commission of 15 per cent, which, though high, is considerably less than book-sellers charge book publishers.

Journal authors are, of course, unpaid. Indeed, American journals often charge authors up to \$80 a page for the privilege of publication. Some publishers pay editors a royalty, but most offer flat-rate fees — £1,000 a year would be a common and convenient figure for a better-selling journal. Editorial assistants — often jobs for PhDs or well-qualified wives of faculty members — receive freelance rates, probably not much more than £5 an hour. Expenses are further reduced by the common editorial practice of commandeering departmental secretaries and equipment at no cost to the publisher (though universities are now clamping down on such subsidies).

All this should make journal publishing a very profitable business, though it is hard to get publishers to admit it. Overheads can cover a multitude of expense accounts, losses from one division can be shifted to reduce the profits of another. A commercial publisher will admit to a profit on journal turnover in excess of twenty per cent. A non-publisher examining price, circulation and costs could be forgiven for detecting an unexceptional mark-up of fifty per cent or more. Whatever the figure, when academic publishers were hit by high production costs and falling sales in the second half of the 1970s, the rush into journal publishing was pronounced — as the catalogues of Oxford University Press, Routledge, Butterworth, Frank Cass and other established houses make clear.

As well as the publisher-owned journal, most publishers have society-owned journals on their lists. In 1979 a survey by Alan Singleton of Leicester University's Primary Communication Research Centre found that a third of society journals were published by professional publishers under a variety of agreements. In the last five years even more society journals have been snapped up by publishers. Societies, too, have become more hard-headed, shopping around for the best possible deal. It is a confusing area, with profit-sharing, royalties, commission payments and a host of other contractual intricacies which Singleton has charted in his booklet, *Hints on Society-Publisher Relations*.

Most societies, if they have a journal, live off it. All their activities will be paid for or subsidized by journal income. This is the desirable face of journal publishing. Take, for example, the prestigious *Journal of Physiology*, published by Cambridge University Press for the Physiological Society. Published twelve times a year in two-inch-thick volumes, the 1983 UK

price is £410. Membership of the Society costs about £35 a year and includes the journal. The Society has about 1,400 members, and about 2,500 non-members (ie, libraries) subscribe to the journal. The journal must, therefore, turn over more than £1m a year; the society's income from it is in the order of £100,000. It earns as much again from investment income, secured as a result of previous surpluses of journal income over expenditure.

Some societies prefer to act as their own publisher; they can earn more cash for their activities or, if they wish, keep their prices low. The distinguished and distinctive history journal *Past and Present* (1952) is owned and published by the Past and Present Society. It publishes quarterly at an annual cost to members of £13.50 (less to students and pensioners) and £21 to institutions. The similar-size *Journal of Contemporary History*, published quarterly by Sago (company turnover about \$9m), costs £17 to individuals and £34 to institutions.

The Past and Present Society's production costs for its publication are clearly much higher than those of a publisher with a range of titles. Yet it manages to hold regular conferences and publish their proceedings, as well as editing its own series of monographs (published by CUP). Several publishers have bid for the journal, offering to relieve the Society of the burden of production, and to promote it more effectively. T. H. Aston, Editor of *Past and Present*, points out that it is already energetically promoted by a dedicated editorial team. On a publisher's list it would have to take its chance along with dozens of other journals and run the risk of an accelerating decline in subscriptions (currently around 4,000), in response to the inevitable price rise.

The big four commercial journal publishers are Pergamon, Academic Press (190 titles), Springer Verlag (170 titles) and the Dutch giant, Elsevier (500 titles). Competition between them, and between a host of smaller publishers including university presses, is intense. In the last decade the number of journal titles has doubled, and in the last five years journal prices have doubled.

For much of the 1970s libraries spent about half their budgets on journals and half on books. Today many libraries have to spend 70 per cent of their (reduced) budgets on journals just to maintain current subscriptions. In universities with a strong science side the proportion is larger still. The response of leading journal publishers has been to increase their journals list and cut back on monographs. Books are losing out in a Malthusian struggle. Libraries, however, are fighting back and many established journals are experiencing a drop in subscriptions of up to four to five per cent a year. Cellings are set on periodical budgets. Each new title taken leads to the cancellation of an old subscription. Readership surveys to gauge a journal's utility are becoming increasingly common.

Scientists have known for a long time that the vast majority of scientific papers remain unread. The *Science Citation Index* ranks science journals according to the number of their papers cited in other papers. The result is an annual beauty contest which provides the scientific community with a clear picture of the prestige of individual journals. The journal of a very narrow subject area can come quite low down the list but still maintain its reputation — providing it is ahead of its competitors.

Each year *Nature* publishes a new journals issue, which is a sure guide to science fashion as well as to scientific advances. The geo-sciences seem to be the flavour of 1984 (offering some scope for advertising revenue), and biotechnology continues to do well. Half-a-dozen substantial biotechnology titles have been launched since 1982, together with a flotilla of newsletters and review journals. Of course new titles reflect new specializations, and workers in new specializations often need secondary journals to inform them about their wider subject area. But the net result is even more uncited papers.

Most journal publishers will argue that the increase in new journal titles, and the ensuing glut of papers, is not the result of their entrepreneurial flair, but of academic pressure. In spite of the large increase in titles there is no shortfall in submitted papers, quite the reverse. Editors report that they are receiving 10

per cent more papers in all subjects, and in the life-sciences up to 50 per cent more. A declining academic population is steadily increasing its productivity. As funds shrink, victory in the battle for tenure, research grants and promotion is more than ever dependent upon volume and quality of journal contributions. Publishers are happy to oblige.

Dr Fred Ratcliffe, University Librarian at Cambridge, argued as long ago as the late 1960s for a two-tier system of publication. Journal referees should be capable of distinguishing between the important (likely to be cited) and the less important (uncited) papers. Just the title of the less earth-shattering paper could be published in the journal, and the text be stored in a data-bank. The case for a two-tier system is more pressing than ever, but journal editors do not show much interest. A data-bank is as good as a grave; which may please librarians but is unpopular with authors. The *Journal of Modern History* (Chicago University Press) operates a two-tier system — and few people seem interested in its data-bank titles.

It is probably fair to say that the majority of journals, old and new, exist to satisfy the needs of writers rather than readers. The same used to be true of academic monographs, though recent cuts in library spending have helped to reduce that amount of dross. Ironically, the dross finds its way into the library anyway — as the unpublishable book is broken up into publishable articles. The process seems unstoppable, for the scholarly community needs journals; hierarchies are built around them, membership of the editorial board can advance a career more rapidly than it advances knowledge.

Dense but democratic

Ian Hamilton

Raritan: A quarterly review
\$12 per year, Rutgers University, 165 College Avenue, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903.

In the very first issue of *Raritan* (Summer, 1981) the editor, Richard Polier, promised some heavy traffic for belle-lettists: "For our contributors, quite as much as for those people or works they write about, language is not something that offers itself for summary or translation, something after the fact, an encoding that can be made otherwise available. Nor does it, as in the old dream of close analysis, neatly accommodate its own tensions and contradictions. It is instead an activity, an agitated, often dislocating effort to appropriate and change the reality it confronts."

In the same issue, Denis Donoghue came close to a nervous rewriting of the editor's confident letter of intent: "the extenuating principles which govern our reading are again under interrogation, like political or ethical attitudes. Much of the interrogation is displaced from poet to reader... It appears that, having removed the mystery from the poet to the language in which he is implicated as in the air he lives by breathing, we feel obliged to retain the mystery — or at least the air of mystery — if only by ascribing it to ourselves."

The liveliness of *Raritan* has to do with its willingness to modify Polier's elevated resolve with, as it were, a dash of Donoghue's superstition. (Of late, it has even relaxed its originally stern unwillingness to offer hospitality to new poems and short stories.)

Although formidably serious most of the time, *Raritan* has never allowed itself to lose sight of the "ordinary consciousness" which its high theory is — in theory — aimed to alter. It has its low interests, and these are passionately held — interests in cinema and photography, chiefly, but also in other branches of what it stoutly disdains to call pop culture. It has even allowed space for the occasional memoir: in one issue, the good-tempered if rambling reminiscences of Lincoln Kirstein sat, oddly alongside an irritably eloquent defence by Polier of the magazine's supposed (by its enemies) attachment to the dense and difficult.

This essay by Polier ("You're Being Difficult", Winter 1982) revealed much about the strength of *Raritan*: principally, it conveyed the magazine's excited belief in the momentariness of what it's up to, a belief that enlivens (at least theoretically) even its most stodgily self-admiring stretches of abstraction. Culture

New technologies are supposedly riding to the rescue of beleaguered libraries, readers and trees. So far there is little evidence of this. The once new microform publication is unpopular: it is difficult to read, difficult to copy and hugely over-priced. The still new electronic journal, where a title is entered into a computer store and can be called up "on-line" on a screen, is unlikely to appeal (yet) to the editors and readers of, say, the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. Electronic journal publishing is clearly appropriate for the exchange of current scientific information; unfortunately it is usually far too expensive for the academic user (Pergamon charges £35-£75 per "connect hour" and from 10p to 30p per offline print).

One technological development that has had an impact is the photocopier. To the disgust of publishers, the British Library Leading Division at Boston Spa photocopies articles from its vast collection of journals on request, at an average charge of under £3. It has some two million requests a year, mainly for articles from science journals. Publishers and societies — who receive nothing from the BL photocopying service — are hoping to benefit from its pilot project ADONIS, which aims to store about 4,000 journals on-line, and pay the journal about 25p per request.

On October 17, 1984, journal publishers met in London under the auspices of the Publishers Association to form a Serial Publishers' Executive to defend the trade against shrinking profit margins. There is an annual conference of librarians, publishers, agents and editors called the UK Serials group. Somewhere, no doubt, there are also journals devoted to learned journal publishing.

Intellectuals, *Raritan* believes, have an obligation to know what culture is — what it's for, and how it works; and if not to know, then to investigate, with sceptical and learned eye, "those intricate movements by which ideas or events, canons or hierarchies of preference, minorities or cultural strata come into existence". At intense moments like this, one almost hears the voice of *Scrutiny*; although Polier, it must be said, is intractably severe with moralists.

As if *Raritan*'s air of nervous excitement did not tell us so, Polier is obligingly ready to agree that there is something distinctively American about the magazine: again, it comes back to this worry about not being understood. The magazine's style may often be dense and unapproachable, he says, but you can be sure that it contains within it a democratic dream: "The fear of unintelligibility, of not understanding, of not being understood, is an immigrant fear, whether you are new to a country or to a cultural life. Born of this fear is a dream of brilliant clarity."

Polier doesn't need to tell us that at the age of ten, he began teaching his own father how to read and write; but we like him quite a lot for thinking that perhaps he should.

As to that dream of brilliant clarity: it will surely remain dream-like so long as words like "mode", "specificity" and "legitimation" are allowed to clog the channels of communication. And one can hardly see Polier's local shopkeeper (invoked by him at one point as a target consciousness) stiffening to attention over essays that begin: "This essay will sketch part of a longer story about the invocation of the literary object, and the sort of interest we are supposed to take in it."

Still, there is a good deal less of this kind of pseudo-scientific posturing than might be feared, and in almost every issue there has been some brilliance and much clarity. One thinks of pieces by Edward Said, Stanley Cavell and Frank Kermode (on Helen Gardner on him — the issue of Fall, 1982; not to be missed); of Elaine Showalter on R. D. Laing; Vicki Hoagme on DogSpeak; and Raymond Carney on Film Critics. *Raritan* clearly wants to move out of the lecture hall and there is no reason to suppose that by extending its range — into, say, popular music, the press, television — it would need to surround the weighty vehemence of its approach. Certainly, of all the current American critical quarterlies, this is the one that seems most ready to surprise itself.

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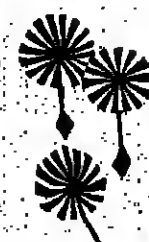
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CLAUDE RAWSON (Editor)
English Satire and the Satiric Tradition
288pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £22.50 (paperback, £7.50).
0531 136681

It is now generally accepted that the word "satire" derives not, as was once believed, from the Latin *satyrus*, a wild and hirsute monster, but from the more civilized and domestic *saturnia lux*, a full dish of assorted meats. This is a highly appropriate description of this volume, *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition*, which offers a very full dish crammed with scholarly meats of every taste and texture; some tough and some tender, the cooked and the raw, some highly seasoned epigrammatic ragouts and a few cold cuts.

The first thing to say is that although the essays are arranged according to a chronological sequence from Aristophanes to Borges, there is no attempt to impose a unifying pattern or methodology on the volume. Indeed the inclusion of essays on Aristophanes and Borges in a volume otherwise devoted to English satire indicates the eclecticism of approach. First published as a special issue of the *Yearbook of English Studies* (14) 1984, the essays are intended as an "act of homage" to the late Robert C. Elliott, author of *The Power of Satire* (1960). Elliott, remarks Claude Rawson in a brief but cogent introductory essay, "reminded us forcefully of satire's aggressive origins without losing sight of its artful transformation".

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History

The English Historical Review.
Volume XCIX/No 392, July 1984
£29 per year. Longman, Subscriptions
(Journals) Dept., Fourth Avenue, Harlow,
Essex CM19 5AA.

For impeccable traditional scholarship, the *English Historical Review*, published quarterly, keeps up its deserved reputation. The reader seeking rich learning, plainly expressed, will enjoy in the July 1984 number David Crook discussing the dating of the origins of the legend of Robin Hood, or Edward Powell's account of what went on before the JPs at Shrewsbury in 1414. But these days more contentions of political history are also prominent in the Review, witness Alex Tyrell's sharp analysis of how English Baptists manipulated anti-slavery agitation both to advance proselytizing in Jamaica and to direct radical politics at home. Browning historians also make a bee-line for those pale grey covers for the consistent quality and breadth of its book-reviews. This time the pick includes Michael Howard's generous tribute to William McNell ("one of the most enterprising of living historians"), and Mark Goldie's "placing" of Keith Thomas's *Man and the Natural World* (Goldie's depiction of Thomas as an "Armstrong" is both charming and apt).

Roy Porter

The Historical Journal
Volume 27 No 2, June 1984
£45 per year. Cambridge University Press,
The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road,
Cambridge CB2 2RU.

Almost identifiably, the *Historical Journal* has become identified as an organ for research into modern British political history; and so it comes as no great surprise to open the June 1984 issue and find a further re-examination of Gladstone and the election of 1880 (a fine piece of demythologizing, by T. A. Jenkins). The Journal has also set high standards in essay-reviews; and this number contains a splendid historiographical spring-clean: Rab Houston and K. D. M. Small demolish the fashionable "proto-industrialization" (conceptually confused, empirically invalid, and theoretically barren, they find). But there has also been a trend towards more social history.

Douglas Gray explores Elliott's identification of the origins of satire with some forms of primitive magic and discusses the "rough music" of the flytings of Skelton, Henryson and Dunbar by comparing them with the spells and curses of Celtic literature and the ritual chants of children's games. Ian Donaldson argues that anger operates as a strong creative force in the plays of Jonson, and Ken Robinson reveals in the verbal violence of Rochester's satires, relishing lengthy quotations from the more satirical lampoons which he compares to the primitive blows on an Eskimo drum-song. Rochester's satires, writes Robinson, "embody a delicate balance between wit and brutality" but throughout his essay wit and tricks are less evident than their bodily rhymes. On the other hand, Stephen Halliwell's essay on Aristophanes emphasizes the playful rather than the punitive aspects of satire, arguing that the festivals at which the plays were performed had their own distinctive ethos of licensed irreverence.

Predictably, the largest number of essays in this volume deal with eighteenth-century satire. Sometimes one has the feeling that Pope, the "poet of allusion", couldn't write a syllable without including at least one and possibly two antithetical allusions within it. This volume contains three essays which identify further debts, references and borrowings in his satires. Raman Seiden documents a number of Pope's borrowings from Oldham, arguing that the Restoration poet provided Pope with "a full inventory of the topoi associated with 'false wit'". Howard Erskine Hill examines the card-

connected with literature and the visual arts, including film. Tom Conley, in his critical afterword, sees them as divided into two main camps. Those he most admires (Yves Bonnefoy and Gabriele Schwab among them) tend towards a kind of productive regression, an "undifferentiating" stress on the energies released by word and image. Others — and he singles out W. J. T. Mitchell — "engage in schematic logic in order to deprive an image of its textual 'virtuality'". The distinction is real enough, although (like many *NLH* summings-up) it takes a frankly partial retrospective view.

Christopher Norris

Literature

Yale French Studies
No 67: Concepts of Closure
\$20 per year (2 issues). Yale University Press,
92A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520.

Yale French Studies remains a progressive journal, publishing mainly theoretical essays and far from confined to French literature alone. Each issue has a theme, which gives it the weight and single-mindedness of a book, when most other modern language journals prefer to be miscellanies. It carries no book reviews. The theme of the latest issue, Number 67, is "Concepts of Closure". Four of the fourteen essays included deal with medieval writing, the most arresting of them being Paul Zumthor's on "The Impossible Closure of the Oral Text". Others engage with Racine, Diderot, Balzac, Beckett, Sartre and Denis Roche, as if to demonstrate that author criticism still predominates in American faculties of literature even among critics who have learnt to transcend it.

John Sturrock

New Literary History
Volume XV No 3: Spring 1984
\$18 per year. Johns Hopkins Press, Journals
Division, Baltimore, Maryland 21218.

NLH (founded in 1969) was one of the first English-language journals given over largely to topics of interpretative theory. Its current high prestige is a sign of the extent to which theory is now accepted (in America at least) as a self-respecting critical enterprise. The policy has always been firmly non-sectarian; post-structuralists rubbing shoulders with analytical philosophers. There has also been a welcome move towards breaking down the old disciplinary barriers and encouraging critics to look at their structures and encouraging criticism to look outside their safely specialized domain. The current issue ("Image/Image/Imagination") brings together essays on a range of topics

games in the *Rape of the Lock* and in Wordsworth's *Prelude* and discovers some teasingly provocative political ironies in the rise and fall of paste-board kings and queens. Niall Rudd offers a series of notes on Pope's imitations of Horace.

The same spirit of literary sleuthing informs Ronald Paulson's study of Hogarth's *Country Inn Yrdr*, which serves as a cover illustration for this volume. Starting with a few elementary clues, Paulson proceeds to decode symbols and decipher visual puns. The Old Angel Inn, which Hogarth mispells as "old Angle Inn" is clearly England; a sleeping dog in its kennel represents political apathy; a smoking pipe in an old crone's mouth indicates mortality, and so on. But he goes further, detecting a conspiratorial pattern of reciprocating curves that operate like visual rhymes or diagrammatic slogans. "The round stomach of the one is repeated in the circular hat held out by the other", rumps are echoed by humps, wheels parodied by wens, and at the centre of it all, the focal clue and metaphor for the whole print is the fat bottom of a woman literally turning her back on the viewer and the world. She personifies the "broad-bottomed" ministry whose apathy is responsible for old England's woes.

Broad Bottoms are also cited by Hugh Kenner who gives this Hogarthian illustration of Wyndham Lewis's satiric style: Sigismund, an inept lover, subsides to the floor with a woman when his dog Pym "imagining that his master was being maltreated by this person ... flew to the rescue and fixed his teeth in her eighteenth century bottom". Kenner's essay is

connected with literature and the visual arts, including film. Tom Conley, in his critical afterword, sees them as divided into two main camps. Those he most admires (Yves Bonnefoy and Gabriele Schwab among them) tend towards a kind of productive regression, an "undifferentiating" stress on the energies released by word and image. Others — and he singles out W. J. T. Mitchell — "engage in schematic logic in order to deprive an image of its textual 'virtuality'". The distinction is real enough, although (like many *NLH* summings-up) it takes a frankly partial retrospective view.

Christopher Norris

Poetics: An International journal of linguistic-literary studies. Volumes 18, 1984
\$38.50 per year. Stubbins International, 12-7
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Volume 18 of *Poetics* is a substantial offering of medieval and Renaissance studies. Douglas Gray's "The Robin Hood Poems" is a lively and detailed survey of the field. Arthur Wayne Glowka makes a case for Layamon's prosody, especially as instanced in his treatment of the *Lear* story, as a "vital force in the poem". Mikiko Ishii relates *The Weavers' Pageant* to the *ars predicandi*, and William Gater suggests that modern theories of linguistic purity are in practice inseparable from chauvinistic values: Dante was wise before his time in recognizing that Tuscan was not necessarily the most "delectable" language in the world.

The most striking contribution is John Carey's "structure and Rhetoric in Sidney's *Arcadia*". Though not signalled as such, it appears to be a recantation of the views he expressed in the *Sphere History of English Literature*, Vol 2, in 1970. Then he wrote of the "sterile variety", "pretentious ceremonial" and "elegant barbarity" of Sidney's style; now, however, Sidney's rhetoric is "not decorative, but functional". From being an empty and unpleasant work, the *Arcadia* has become full to bursting.

Katherine Duncan-Jones

Eighteenth Century Life
Volume VII, new series, 2
\$10 per year. Dept of English, College of
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23185.

Published tri-annually by the College of William and Mary, *Eighteenth Century Life* has wide interests and a hospitable attitude towards matters of approach and methodology,

lively, pugnacious, provocative and highly appropriate to its subject. Martin Price examines satire in Conrad, Barbara Everett suggests that the "jazz-age" verse of Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* may owe something to the prose of Ring Lardner and Anita Loos, and John Sturrock offers an appraisal of Borges's gentle caricatures. This is a volume full of good solid scholarship, yet slightly disappointing in its lack of definition. In Hogarthian terms, it's a creature more remarkable for its broad bottom than its teeth.

The *Yearbook of English Studies*, originally designed as a supplement to the English Section of the *Modern Language Review*, has, since 1978, been devoted in large part to a collection of essays grouped round a particular theme. Besides the 1984 issue on Satire, reviewed above, recent issues have been devoted to Colonial and Imperial Themes, Heroes and the Heroic, and Literature and its Audience, while forthcoming numbers will deal with Anglo-French Literary Relations (1985) and Literary Periodicals since the Eighteenth Century (1986). The *Yearbook* retains its links with the *Modern Language Review* and membership of the Modern Humanities Research Association (current subscription £11.50/\$23 per annum) carries with it a free subscription to the *Review* as well as the option to purchase the *Yearbook* at the reduced rate of £8 (\$15). Information about membership of the MHR is obtainable from the Honorary Treasurer, Professor R. A. Wilsby, at King's College, Strand, London WC2R 2LS.

but risks spreading itself too thinly across the Pascalian spaces of Enlightenment scholarship and falling into shallow syncretism. At its best the journal avoids this danger, and though a typical contents list ranges widely (Kant and Moses Mendelssohn; cultural life in Norwich; the book trade in Catherine's Russia; Gibbon on superstition), the individual items are generally strong enough to provide focus. (The Gibbon item, in Volume VIII, no 1, was a characteristically searching piece by J. G. A. Pocock.) The most significant recent issue was a guest-edited special number, for January 1983, which confined itself to the theme of British and American gardens, with almost all the brand leaders (Woodbridge, Brownell Hunt, Brogden, Sambrook, Thacker, Tait, Martin, Cummings, et al) individually, and indeed mutually illuminating.

Pat Rogers

Philosophy

The Journal of Mind and Behaviour
\$25 per year. The Institute of Mind and Behaviour, Inc, PO Box 522, Village Station,
New York City, New York 10014.

Now in its fifth year, *JMB* has a very firm notion of its particular niche in the academic sphere. It is "based upon the premise that all meaningful statements about human behaviour rest ultimately upon observation — with no one scientific method possessing, *a priori*, greater credence than another"; and it is dedicated to the facilitation of interdisciplinary exchanges within psychology and "related fields". These related fields stretch far and wide — the editor's special interests include "the mind/body problem in the social sciences, medicine, literature and art", and "phenomenological, existential and introspective reports relevant to psychology, psychosocial methodology, and social philosophy". One of the best numbers of *JMB* to date (Volume 3, No 3, Summer 1982) was a special issue devoted to papers on the work of Stephen Pepper (1891–1971), who developed a striking theory about the "root metaphors" that lie behind and inform particular scientific theories and indeed general scientific and philosophical outlooks.

Galen Strawson

This is the first of a series of regular pages in the *TLS* commenting on recent issues of scholarly journals. We should like it to be as comprehensive as possible, and invite the editors of appropriate journals to send review copies of them to the Editor.

FORTHCOMING SPECIAL NUMBERS

IN THE TLS

Switzerland — December 7

Contributors include: George Steiner, Adolf Muschg, Jean Starobinski, Georges Poulet and many more, covering topics ranging from "The essence of Swissness", "Rousseau and autobiography" to "The Swiss Army" and "Art in Switzerland".

Computers and Artificial Intelligence — December 14

This feature will contain articles and reviews on the Reith Lectures, and on various computer games and books.

(779)

John Sturrock

MICHAEL J. SHEERAN
Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless decisions in the Religious Society of Friends
153pp. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (distributed in the UK by Quaker Home Service). £3.95.
0941308049

JOHN PUNSHON
Portrait In Grey: A short history of the Quakers
293pp. Quaker Home Service. £6.
0852345180 6

In the event, Pennsylvanian ecumenicalism has produced a diverting study from a re-announced Princeton thesis in politics. Alas, no index; the unaccountable omission of Elizabeth Isichei's highly relevant study of Victorian Quakers, *Organisation and Power in the Society of Friends* (1965); and it was surely strange Gervase Bennett of Derby who in 1650 coined the nickname "Quaker"! Quibbles apart, Sheeran's account of "covered" meetings, congerency theory and alternative Quaker myths, among other things – including the informative appendix on Christian tradition and Quakerism – will have much to interest Quakers, social scientists and political philosophers alike; it will, too, offer British Friends a voyeuristic pleasure without having to expose themselves to the inconvenience of a similar scholarly visitation.

There is no doubt of Sheeran's aim: to track the code of "communal discernment" — a phrase which, unfortunately, self-respecting English Friends would rather eat their hats than use. Discarding Plan A, in which, as popular rumour has it, Quaker methods originated in a willingness to agree through mainly silent attention to the Inner Light — generally considered to have been an English invention — Sheeran has come up with his own Plan B, in which "voiceless decisions" — "deeply embedded in Scripture" — were actually the brainchild of Ignatius Loyola two centuries earlier; and furthermore — could this be Plan C? — this form of decision-making might well be the answer, not only for Roman Catholics, but for everyone else, religious or no, who suffers from "the common contemporary wish for advancement beyond the fragmented individualisation of liberal man". In the confines of Sheeran's own Quakero: power, structure, however, Quaker methods might be met not in dumb silence but with a positive uproar of dissenting Cardinals.

which used to address social superiors by the accurate but familiar "thou" rather than the honorific plural "you" employed by the socially subservient; and which cheerfully accepted imprisonment rather than compromise its idiosyncratic sensitivity to pronouns.

But even a real Friend, John Punshon, lecturer at Woodbrooke, the Quaker college in Birmingham, who has written *Portrait in Grey: A short history of the Quakers*, tends to patronize with the pedagogic "here-we-shall-attempt-to-explain" style. A low opinion of communications between his co-religionists leads him to state that they are unaware of the many exciting developments which "have not yet filtered through to the meeting-house bench". This is no more accurate than Punshon's inappropriate coupling of the Royal Society and the Religious Society of Friends as "two of the most respected national institutions" of the seventeenth century. But then alternative polemic nnd frost are very much in the Quaker style. Punshon's useful historical survey, coloured in energetic language, although satisfactorily comprehensive about Quaker beginnings and subsequent developments — especially with regard to later American schisms — is by no means adequate for the modern period. He gives, for example, no account of the breakthrough achieved by *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* and the many "fringe" groups, which may have effectively weakened Quaker structures. An index? Yes. But a pretty thin select bibliography, and — maddeningly — no references whatsoever.

A life for the dying

SHIRLEY DUBOULAY
Cicely Saunders: The founder of the Modern
Hospice Movement
268pp. Hodder and Stoughton: £10.95
(paperback: £7.95)
0340 351039

"Go and read Medicine. It's the doctors who desert the dying"; so advised Norman Barrett, the famous surgeon of St Thomas's. Cicely Saunders followed his advice, and—though newly qualified—changed the attitudes of the medical profession to the process of dying. In this surprising and skilful biography, Shirley du Boulay gives very full information about Dame Cicely's home, academic and medical training, and the origins and growth of the Modern Hospice Movement. Thanks to the use of diaries and 'direct reports of conversation, the biography at times becomes an autobiography; but questions and criticisms are sensitively faced in a frank account.

Cicely Saunders took advantage of new developments to give analgesic drugs in time to prevent pain, rather than afterwards; and if possible by mouth – so that patients at home could continue the treatment, even though they could not be expected. She believes that the community needs the dying as much as it needs the new-born. Doctors and nurses are not "wasting time" by explaining what is being done, keeping in touch with relatives and having the opportunity to say the right thing in the right way at the right time. Only a caring and accepting community can learn to love dying people. Patients said, "I only want someone to look as if they were trying to understand me". "It's good to feel a wanted person". The diary of a patient going blind and then dying of cancer (which is quoted) is a penetrating description of the effects of being cared for "in extremis". Towards the end, he said: "I seem to be at the beginning of my life."

Francis Bacon wrote, "I conceive it the office of the physician not only to restore health but to mitigate pains and dolours; not only when such mitigation may conduce to recovery but when he may serve to make a fair and easy passage." The "easy passage" called euthanasia is much discussed. Chely Saunders is an outspoken opponent. She believes that hospices and homes, home care teams and hospital support teams can care to the end. Certainly the list of UK and Ireland institutions already existing is impressive. The Movement takes Chely Saunders and the United States and increasingly in other countries, the medical culture

Medical ministry

ALASTAIR V. CAMPBELL
Moderated Love: A theology of professional care
 151pp. SPCK. Paperback, £4.95.
 0281 04093 f

JANE H. THOMPSON
Spiritual Considerations in the Prevention, Treatment and Cure of Disease
 11 lpp. Stocksfield: Oriel Press. £6.95 (paperback, £3.95).
 08536221 t 6

Most of the care needed by those who are ill or who cannot cope unaided is provided by members of their families or friends as an amateur unpaid and part-time activity. Professionals supply expert care for only a minority, who are, so to speak, the visible tip of an iceberg; but because they earn their living this way, any suggestion that they work even partly "for love" needs to come under careful scrutiny. And this notwithstanding the age-long assumption that people in the caring professions have a sense of vocation, implying that something more is to be expected from them than any negotiated contract could specify. It is this "something more" that is explored in these two books.

Both are written from Christian viewpoints, though Alastair V. Campbell justly claims to be reflecting on "concerns which cross divisions between believers and non-believers". He sees his task as "one of creating imaginative

Impressive to see a great and ancient profession learning new skills.

This biography vividly illustrates religious realities in post-war Britain. Cicely Saunders and her colleagues at St Christopher's start from a position of tolerance, so that a non-believing patient may put a model of a small devil where a crucifix might be expected. No one is pressurized into belief. There is, however, a chapel at the heart of the hospital. Cicely Saunders does not hide the fact that her own "conversion" was evangelical. Her experience at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Hospital was crucial to her development. Her wisest adviser on St Christopher's as a religious foundation was Dr Olive Wyon, former principal of a women's theological college and a leading ecumenist. Enlightened sisters in the traditional Anglican Order of St Mary's, Wantage, recognized in Cicely Saunders the source of a movement which must plough its own furrow, finding and giving security without the aid of rules, vows and formal organization. In marked contrast to those groups in the churches who refuse to countenance either new ecumenical structures or the opening of leadership posts to women, this fresh spring of Christianity is conducted by a woman able to draw on many different resources within the Christian and other religious traditions.

Critics of Clocely Saunders have asked whether we can afford hospices, many of which are outside the Health Service; and all of which depend upon a high ratio of staff to patients. Surprisingly, costing research figures seem to indicate that, in some regions, hospice and hospital expenses are fairly even. In many regions health authorities are happy to contract to pay for beds in hospices for NHS patients' health care. In the last decades of this century will require everyone to give more of their resources and time to service, including the service of the dying.

The personal qualities revealed in this perceptive biography invite many reflections. To glibly and so shy, who experienced the traumatic death of those she loved most, became a personality capable of bringing serenity and beauty to terminal illness, which must often be harsh and irrational when "we gaze against the dying of the light." The founder of St. Christopher's is shown to be at times a formidable autocrat and skilful organizer, but her work leads to listening and laughter. Here is a book which will be enjoyed by young and old, by those with and those without religion. If "soul-making" is a phrase which can still denote something of the purpose and meaning of life, then Cissy Saunders is revealed as a

links between religious and non-religious interpretations of professionalism", and within the limitations of 150 pages he is remarkably successful. He makes the point that even if no human acts are wholly disinterested, some space should still be allowed for at least partial altruism of motive. Then he examines the three professions of medicine, nursing and social work to see in what terms it is possible to describe this altruistic element, while giving proper weight to their moral uncertainties, such as the dominance or paternalism assumed by doctors, the confusion involved in interpreting the nursing role as "angel, mother or body-expert", and the dilemma of social workers whether implicitly to support a sick society by helping its suffering members to adapt to it, or to support (what they see as) their clients' true humanity by seeking to change society. What emerges is somewhat unexpected: In medicine, an ethic of *brotherliness* (or *sisterliness*), in nursing, one of *companionship*, and in social work, one of *hope*; but the case is well argued and thought-provoking.

Later chapters discuss the professionals' claim to purity, to "knowing what is best," and also the nature of care and being cared for. A final chapter on the "politics of love" concludes that in such terms the professions are relatively unimportant: their role as "moderators of love" having perhaps cooled them to a Lao-tsean lukewarmness while their social position protects them from the vulnerability which love at its best implies. Presumably only professionals will feel disappointed by such a conclusion. Campbell's study of "knowing what is best" seems particularly helpful. So often pe-

ple repeat the slogan "knowledge is power!" indeed Campbell himself uses the phrase as a heading. But knowledge is *not* power (though it may provide means of controlling it). If I have power and give it to you, I have it no longer. Power obeys the laws of energy. But I have knowledge and give it to you, we both have it – and new knowledge is often generated by such sharing. And when Campbell picks out *particularly, mutuality and incompleteness* as three essential features of the knowledge of what is best for persons, one can see how irrelevant it would be to talk of power in such terms.

Jane H. Thompson's book records a very different way of approaching the "something more" which we expect from those who care. She is a psychotherapist and helped to found a counselling centre in Newcastle which ran for sixteen years, combining psychotherapy and spiritual direction with religious offices such as the laying on of hands. Her Christian conviction as recorded here is of the kind usually described as conservative-evangelical. She speaks of healing as if it is to be understood as a transitive verb (which it should not be; healing is like growing or living. Wounds heal, but a doctor does not heal them). She speaks without diffidence or disapproval of the consultant "reigning" in his department of the hospital, and writes about the pattern of Jesus' ministry to sick with an apparent confidence that many would consider unwarranted: "In a chapter entitled 'The Clinical Jesus' she uses the phrase "no doubt" to qualify statements no less than five times in two pages. Although this book, like Campbell's, is meant as a contribution to understanding the wholeness of life, Dr Thompson talks of the human being as "a tripartite creation of body, mind and spirit" as if these were logical categories of equivalent status. In fact, they constitute a hierarchy of levels analogous to that of chemistry, organic chemistry and biochemistry, and when this is not recognized, mind and spirit tend to be treated as things, like bodies, to a way which confuses rather than clarifies.

Both books in their different ways bear witness to the widespread dissatisfaction which people feel at the fragmentation of care which has accompanied the *furor therapeuticus* of the past forty years; and both affirm that something more than a merely scientific humanism is needed on which to orient our efforts to care for those in trouble.

traditions supply respectively George Every
Richard Harries and Kallistos Ware with pas
pages in the anthology they have selected and
edited, *Seasons of the Spirit: Readings through
the Christian Year* (259pp, SPCK, paperback
£7.50, 0 281 04090 7).

The aura of renunciation

GREG BAILEY
The Mythology of Brahmā
 256pp. Oxford University Press. £12.
 019 5614119

C.J. FULLER
*Servants of the Goddess: The priests of a South
 Indian temple*
 233pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
 071 247772

In folodogical studies, it appears, all roads lead to the Brahman. The two books here under review, each a fine example of a particular genre of scholarship, begin worlds apart: The *Mythology of Brahmd* by Greg Bailey is a sound philological study of archaic Sanskrit myths about a great Hindu god; C. J. Fuller's *Servants of the Goddess* is a coteremporary anthropological study of the economic and political problems of the Tamil priests in a great South Indian temple. Yet, at the end of their very different meanderings through the Indian labyrinth, the two authors arrive at some of the same basic concerns: the complex interdependence of myth and ritual; the conflict between the values of the renouncer and the values of people involved in the "real world"; and the ways in which ritual figures (mythological or real) lose status. The fact that these problems appear central both to the stories about the god (Brahma) and to the lawsuits involving the priests (Brahmans) provides the latest in a series of links between the god and the priest, that begins with the definite If heavy etymological bond between the Sanskrit terms for both; Bailey suggests that "there are compelling reasons to view [Brahma's] early development as a process of apotheosization of the *brahmd* priest." This series, as well as the present mutual reinforcement of two authors with such different methodological *postures d'app*, leads one to suspect that these concerns may actually be central not only to the world of the god and the priest, but, more broadly, to Indian intellectual history as a whole.

Bailey's book begins with ritual and history before it plunges into myth. And the history of the ritual of the god Brahmā embodies what appears to be a paradox: though Brahmā appears in more myths than any other Hindu god, as the central figure in quite a few and a bit player in many more, the rituals associated with his worship have almost completely disappeared from India and were probably never very widespread. Bailey doggedly mines the scanty historical sources (apigraphical as well as literary, Buddhist as well as Hindu) to present a convincing case that Brahmā was indeed once worshipped, certainly at least in Western India. He goes on to suggest, without arguing for it explicitly, that the decline of the worship may have been the consequence of Brahmā's one-dimensionality: unlike the great gods Śiva and Viṣṇu (to whom Brahmā is often appended in a rather half-hearted and unsymmetrical trinity), Brahmā represents only one of the two great strands of Hinduism, the strand associated with *brahmī*, active creation, worldly involvement, the support of *dharma* (active religious religion); and indeed of all sorts of religious trust, even when this may involve the temporary advantage of demons or other forces of evil.

Brahma has no stake in the other strand, the *endores nityi*, withdrawal from the world, renunciation, the occasional support of *śāntarj* (anti-orthodox behaviour, of which renunciation or *moksha* is sometimes seen as a aspect) as well as of *bhakti* or passionate personal devotion to a god. Thus Bailey explains Brahmi's notorious propensity to grant boons to demons who amass ascetic power (*tapas*) as demoniac ascetics: "... do not aspire to *ni*, it does the total renouncer. Their goal is *ni*—power in the triple world and so it remains within *prany* values, even though the *ni* is only temporarily a doer is a reversal of these values." This also explains why Brahm

... among the gods is able to grant the boon of immortality: immortality (or release from death) is his own equivalent - appropriate to him as a god of creation - for the *moksha* release from re-birth or re-death granted to *Siva* and *Vishnu* - with their at least scholastic commitment to re-pudiation in but

With care and erudition, Bailey traces these patterns of meaning in the mythology of Brāhmā through several relevant areas, arranging his material along lines suggested by early Indologists and contemporary scholars (principally Madeleine Biardeau and myself). After his initial survey of the actual evidence for the worship of Brāhmā in ancient India, he discusses Brāhmā's antecedents in the Vedas and the Hindu value systems from which Brāhmā derives his authority. He then translates the texts in which Brāhmā engages in the act of cosmogony, creating by progeniture and by meditation; and he concludes with the myths in which Brāhmā participates in various avatars, becoming involved with Viṣṇu, with demoa ascetics and with the abstract forces of *dharma*, fate and evil.

One particular factor emerges from Bailey's rich and sensibly analysed data to contribute to the explanation of Brahmā's fall from grace. Brahmā is, *par excellence*, the god who creates things. To the considerable extent that all Hindu myths take place in (what Mircea Eliade has termed) *illo tempore*, Brahmā must *ipso facto* be on the scene in any myth; and so he is. But he is always the bridesmaid, and seldom the bride: any simple tabulation of the moments when Brahmā appears on the Hindu mythological stage obscures the fact that he usually has little more than a walk-on part: whenever anyone is needed to create something, or even to create a pregnant situation – to give power to a potential villain so that the action of the conflict can unfold – Brahmā appears *ex machina*.

But his theological weight falls on the wrong side of the pendulum of mythological values from a Hindu point of view. If it can be said that myths form a bridge between philosophy and ritual, it must be said that the gods who survive in the cloud palaces of Hindu myths are those who also have one foot planted firmly in the ground of human ritual. Brahmin, however, is associated with the most abstract values: meditation, the dissemination of the scriptures (the Vedas), the development of individualization (*ahimsa*), and most of all, the primary

tion (*anukṛāda*) and, most of all, the primordial creation of the universe and the secondary creation of the triple world. None of these concepts is linked to any of the specific, localized concerns of the contemporary Hindu liturgy, though several were certainly central to the ancient Vedic ritual system. It might seem tautological to argue that the rituals devoted to Brahmā gradually atrophied because his myths were about philosophy (and therefore, almost by definition, not very much about ritual); but it is rather, I think, saying the same thing in three different ways. First of all, what makes the mythology of Brahmā unique and important from the standpoint of the intellectual history of India is the unusual degree to which it acts out the implications of abstract philosophical principles, primarily the principles of *pravṛti* values. His myths are, therefore, almost devoid of episodes that could be plain or justify the practice either of renunciation or of the specific worldly rituals that are the mainstay of Hinduism. Finally, from the Hindu standpoint a god of this nature is one-sided that he is ultimately an unsatisfactory candidate for the god who is to take responsibility for one's *whole* life, or the so-called object of worship in a temple of his own.

To move from Bailey to Fuller is to move, apparently, from myth to reality. Fuller's book about the Minakshi temple in Madurai, though roughly the size of Bailey's, is far more complex and detailed both in its format (it includes six plates, three maps, three figures, six tables and thirty pages of highly technical notes) and in its use of quantitative data. (It is also far better proof-read than Bailey's book and twice as expensive — two tell-tale signs of reality.) But is this really reality? Fuller's apologetic preface is such a delightful self-portrait of the anthropologist's awareness of the obstacles that can come between the observer and the observed that it is worth quoting at some length:

Clearly, the Mibakal Temple cannot be given a pseudonym. In presenting my material for publication, I have therefore been faced with serious problems. Much of my information was supplied on the explicit or implicit understanding that it would never be published in any way that might be detrimental to the interests of the priests. In several places I have therefore

to choose my words very carefully and on some issues I have had to suppress information or omit relevant evidence. As I am not prepared to break promises of confidentiality, I can only ask the reader to believe that the material accuracy of the text has not been affected. I must also make it plain that, for various reasons, I did not have close contacts with the Temple administration's officials, although they were always formally polite to me. However, this does mean that their side of the picture is largely unrepresented. . . . As a non-Hindu, I was not allowed to enter the Temple's inner areas. This is actually a less serious handicap than it sounds, as few rituals are not also performed outside the inner areas. I do, of course, only know this because I could rely on an assistant to make observations for me in the inner area. My assistant also acted as an interpreter.

Despite these daunting barriers, Fuller manages to pull off the almost Houdini-like act of breaking out of his scholarly solipsism to tell us a great deal about the Minakshi temple. He begins with background about the structure of the temple, the devotees, the daily worship, private worship and festivals. He then analyses the hierarchy of priests within the temple; the relationship between kingship, the law and the priests' rights and duties; between the government and the temple; and between the sacred scriptures and the problem of temple reform.

Out of his immense body of material, Fuller focuses on topics that have a natural appeal to a social anthropologist: status and hierarchy, particularly the low status of the Brahman temple priest vis-à-vis both monks and Brahmins who are not priests. The Brahman priests of the Minakshi temple must be married householders. They must be married in order to gain access, through sexual relations with the wives, to the divine power or *śakti* of the goddess Minakshi. Indeed, the temple priests refuse to have physical contact with monks, because, they argue, such contact with ascetics would somehow drain away a priest's sexual (and hence ritual) powers. Here we encounter the first in a series of related paradoxes. The wives are initiated and consecrated along with their husbands and are therefore said to be qualified to conduct worship in the temple; for some reason there should be no male priests available; yet in practice and *in law*, women can never officiate in the temple. Two very different views of sacred power look horns in this dilemma: women have it (in terms of positive generative and divine force) and they do not have it (in terms of male authoritative structures).

Other paradoxes follow close on one another's heels. According to the temple priests themselves, they rank higher than other Brahmins and higher than renunciators; according to the other Brahmins, they do not. If neither else, this state of affairs should serve to alert against such oft-encountered assertions as that the high status of the Brahmins comes from their role as priests; that priestly Brahmins are higher than non-priestly Brahmins; or that more generally, there is a single hierarchical caste system upon whose ranking all castes agree.

But why is the Brahman priest considered inferior to other Brahmins and to ascetics? There are many different answers, none entirely satisfactory. Fuller rightly rejects the argument, often offered to him, that the priests of the Minakshi temple "are descended from non-Brahman stock and therefore not true Brahmins anyway"; this is, as he quickly points out, a very common myth, perhaps ultimately derived from the ancient myth of the loss of Golden Age, that is invoked to explain many caste anomalies all over India. Another explanation suggests that the priests became polluted because the temples, which are visited by people of all castes, cannot be kept as clean as pure as private homes (in which non-priest Brahmins perform their rituals and which are by this logic, less polluted). Two corollaries of this argument are, first, that only the *hand* of the temple priests are polluted, for they touch the various worshippers, or, second, that the body of the priest but his hands is polluted since his hands are made imputably pure and

role in the diminished status of the temple priest in North India, where the priests are often associated with pilgrimages, funerals, ceremonies and the pollution of death; South Indian temple priests, by contrast, are seldom involved in these practices.

A more basic and, I think, a more convincing explanation, however, views the quandary of the Minakshi priests (as well as temple priests elsewhere in India) as an outgrowth of the paradox that was noted years ago by Jan Heesterman and further developed by Louis Dumont and Madeleine Biardeau: the ideal Brahman should be a renouncer, the representative of transcendence, but he must also enter the social world to carry on rituals on behalf of his patron; thus, as Fuller puts it straightforwardly, "The fundamental paradox of world rejection is evidently that the world must be preserved, so that renouncers can both reject it and live off it." The renouncer may be able to overcome this paradox, at least in principle, by "re-entering" the world while still maintaining the aura of renunciation. But the priest cannot escape; instead, his paradox is translated into a partial split within the Brahman caste, whereby by the priestly half "is charged with the indispensable but demeaning duty of preserving the world that others can then reject. The Brahman priests pay the social price for the supremacy within society of the renouncers' values."

An example of this quandary is the paradox of gifts, first pointed out by Marcel Mauss in 1924 and expanded by Thomas Trautmann in recent years. The Brahmin should not receive gifts, since this makes him dependent on the donor; Heesterman further demonstrated that the payment to the priest is meant to transfer "evil and impurity" from the sacrificer to the priest, thus constituting a main source of the priest's pollution. Yet it is the duty of the sacrificer to give gifts to the priest. As Trautmann put it in *Dravidian Kinship*, 1981, "Only the purest, most disinterested brahmin can accept gifts without danger to himself. But the pure brahmin does not solicit gifts or, better yet, will not accept. Pushed to its logical extreme, the gift finds no recipient."

Ultimately, we find ourselves confronted to the root paradox of *māyā* or illusion. Bail points out how much of Brahmi's low status was the result of his involvement in the illusory creation of the universe, often through mental imagining, and of the way in which our own understanding is distorted and bamboozled by *māyā*, more than is true of Śiva. Vigus, Fuller invokes a closely related aspect of *māyā* to explain why it is that Minakshi's priests "cannot defend themselves against accusations that they are not performing the ritual correctly: "According to the texts, much of the ritual, including almost all its key parts, is accomplished mentally, exclusively or in part, and involves the transformation of immaterial substances and entities [Therefore] would evidently be impossible for an external observer to decide whether the rituals have been done in accordance with textual directions The sceptical observer cannot prove his suspicion and indeed his scepticism depends upon a false inductive procedure, which observable physical actions are taken to be crucial when the whole point is that they not." Thus the essential points that might influence the quality, and, by extension, the status of the temple priests, turn out to be factors to no one can observe . . . not even an observer who has the confidence of anonymous informants, the patronage of the officials, access to the inner sanctum and a fluent command of the native language.

But the final twist to this illusory logic provided by the priests themselves, who well aware of the inevitable rupture between the idea and the reality, "In their own eyes" and other officials persistently mistakes when performing rituals, and elderly priest once criticised me for not down details of a ritual he was performing, said that he was doing it quite wrongly and I should instead record his version of what ought to be done." As always in India, it is ideal that has the last word, the imagined one that triumphs over the actual ritual. V. Fuller's informant wanted him to write it, is largely contained in the sorts of texts Bailey has collected for us. Together, works of Bailey and Fuller constitute two sides of the coin of *māyā* (also known as reality in India. The only trouble is, it is not always possible to tell which side we are looking any one time, and this is why with her two sides of a coin and her small and very

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Into the Eternal Present

David Montrose

BRIAN ALDISS
Seasons in Flight
157pp. Cape. £7.95.
0224 022717
MICHAEL MOORCOCK
The Opium General and other stories
207pp. Horrap. £7.95.
0245 542027

The contents of Brian Aldiss's *Seasons in Flight*, its blurb states, "blend legend, fairy tale and fable"; *The Opium General* (dedicated "To all women at war") is introduced by Michael Moorcock as probably his "most overtly political" book. The two books prove to have features in common, however. Contrary to expectations, six of Aldiss's ten stories are political in character. "The Plain, the Endless Plain" is a Nuclear Age parable. For generations, an alien race has been crossing a monotonous wilderness, surviving hardship and enemy pursuit. Finally, the promised land is sighted: "And at that moment enormous lights lit the sky overhead. . . . And there were huge roaring noises. The ground shook. And a dazzling brilliance . . . shone down from above and extinguished them." Another holocaust, on Earth, forms the backdrop of "The Gods in Flight", the gods being American military kingpins who seek refuge from their apocalyptic handiwork on an East Indian island, only to offend its supernatural guardian. Unfortunately, Aldiss's execution of this promising idea involves too much scene-setting, too little incident.

"Igor and the Mountain" and "Incident in a Far Country" are imitation folk-tales which cynically reverse the usual formula whereby evil is confounded and virtue rewarded. In the first, the mayor of a peasant village attempts to stop the exploitation of local labour. Failing, he accepts injustice and joins the exploiting overdogs. In the second, a prince's enlightened

attitude towards slavery spells disaster for himself, his slaves, and his country. A third imitation, "The Other Side of the Lake", deals, less sharply, with the ideologies that come between peoples. The final political tale, the lightweight "Consolation of Age", brings face-to-face the deposed chiefs of warring African tribes. United in rejection, they forget traditional enmities. Notable among the remaining stories is "The Girl Who Sang", which holds a double interest: one of the few here to show Aldiss operating satisfactorily, it is set on Heliconis, scene of his trilogy-in-progress.

While Aldiss's collection is more political than anticipated, Moorcock's is less so. Its most frankly committed writing occurs in two essays which, along with a book review, bring up the rear. "Starship Stormtroopers" assaults the "implicit authoritarianism" of certain SF writers (pre-eminently Robert Heinlein). "Who'll be Next?" the prosecution of radical bookshops under the Obscene Publications Act. Perversely, the book's title is taken from its least political, and least substantial, story – about a woman whose drug-dealing lover is succumbing to delusions.

The main attraction is "The Alchemist's Question", the novel-length swansong of Moorcock's best-known creation, Jerry Cornelius. Other characters from the Cornelius troupe dominate the proceedings, though. That redoubtable scientist, Miss Brunner, seizes power in Britain and strives, in customary aberrant fashion, to engineer "the New Millennium". Her plan for tomorrow embodies Conservatism at its most reactionary. She dreams of a quasi-medieval society: a reborn Britain "purified and purged" of modern "decadence and self-indulgence". Since that Utopia could only change for the worse, she dreams, too, of turning the river of history "into a tranquil lake", of establishing "the Eternal Present" – the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had the same objective – by inducing, through global war or other means, a nuclear

winter. This will, she believes, hold the world in cryogenic suspension until she and her minions, safely sheltered, can create the perfect conditions for a static society. Leading the opposition, with "a mixture of maths and mysticism", are Una Persson and Jerry's sister, Catherine. Though hugely outnumbered, they defeat Miss Brunner decisively at Glastonbury Tor by tapping the power of a Celtic goddess. At the climax of the battle, a partial reprise of *The Final Programme* – the first novel in Moorcock's Cornelius tetralogy – takes place: Jerry and Catherine fuse to form a golden egg that may produce the all-purpose human being to whom the future belongs. Essentially, the conflict in "The Alchemist's Question" is between antithetical styles of female leadership. "Gender finds" like Miss Brunner – and, by implication, Mrs Thatcher – use what Moorcock's introduction terms "predominantly male dialectic and methods" and are dedicated to the status quo, while Una Persson stands for "a genuine feminist strategy" that will facilitate permanent change for the better.

In the three linked stories that complete the

volume, a KGB agent relates his experiences before and during a Third World War fought between China and a Soviet-American alliance. By far the most accomplished of these is "Crossing into Cambodia", an homage to Isaac Babel that recaptures much of the laconic grace of the stories in *Red Cavalry*.

Both Aldiss and Moorcock move outside familiar territory in these collections. Moorcock, of course, is not really noted as a story-writer, and here ("Crossing into Cambodia" excepted) seems constrained by both the shorter form and the untypical, flat near-realism he employs. The longer baroque style of "The Alchemist's Question" is markedly superior, though even this is smaller in scale and less ambitious than the later novels in the Cornelius tetralogy. Aldiss is highly regarded for his stories. In this collection, though, while some are comparative successes, none ranks with his best. Aldiss has not taken and transformed the stuff of tale and legend, but has curtailed his inventiveness, moving towards a simpler, folkloric style which diminishes the qualities that make his other work distinctive.

Something happened, twice

Colin Greenland

DORIS LESSING
The Diaries of Jane Somers
510pp. Michael Joseph. £9.95.
07181 25177

Jane Somers, "Janna" as she styles herself, is forty-nine, assistant editor of a glossy women's magazine, successful romantic novelist and quasi-sociological essayist. Smart, popular, wealthy, dashing Janna suffers a sudden and devastating attack of Anno Domini for which even the horrible deaths from cancer of her husband and her mother have not prepared her. She realizes that all her grooming "amounts to a holding operation against an invisible enemy who is every day becoming stronger". The angel of this unpleasant annunciation is a filthy old woman she meets in the chemist's and accompanies home, following her indoors uninvited and without a word of explanation.

Thus part one, "The Diary of a Good Neighbour", detailing Janna's attendance on the magnificent and terrible Maudie Fowler as she rages off this mortal coil. In part two, "If the Old Could . . .", Janna overbalances into the convenient arms of a handsome leonine stranger at Tottenham Court Road Underground Station. Again without a word, they fall in love, and meeting again by accident next morning in Soho Square inaugurate an odd, hopeless affair; the two are almost masochistic in their commitment to its unsatisfactoriness.

As in earlier novels (*The Golden Notebook*; *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*), Doris Lessing's protagonist undergoes traumatic spiritual rehabilitation by immersion in a more vital, more desperate undercurrent of existence. But there is something so contrived, so abrupt, about the ways Lessing shoves her in, twice, that her adventures seem almost like pornography, in which characters require similar gross manipulation to get them out of the mundane and into the realm of forbidden, far-vidy-imagined experience. Janna's initiation into senescence is supposed to be shocking; but this is the wrong sort of shock, a narrative jolt, making us look askance not at our own complacency but at Doris Lessing's concern. She is worried; but she enjoys worrying. Like the white-haired incontinent she so strongly and sympathetically describes hunched over their electric fires, Lessing is hypnotized by her own moaning. Her unbuttoned emotionality still coheres in vivid scenes – Janna, in full glamour, from a Munich fashion conference, grappling broken wood from a skip for Maudie Fowler's fire; Janna's niece and nemesis Kate, a Boppo punk, sitting in a blough of crisp packets on Janna's chieftain and radiating inarticulate despair. But the world these tableaux illumine feels suspiciously empty, discontinuous, constructed only to accomplish their suffering.

The fusion of social comment, however well intentioned, is ultimately more fiction. Previously Lessing has employed meta-fiction

and science fictional devices to negotiate and even emphasize the disparity between art and life. The *Diaries of Jane Somers*, a novel masquerading as a pair of journals, arrives in a splendid blaze of ambiguity; but it all proves to be concerned with the reception of the text, not with its meaning. The meaning – that time passes and we fail – is supposed to be unequivocal, though the book itself has changed. Both parts were first published separately as the work of Jane Somers herself, understood to be a pseudonym but "well-known female journalist". This stratagem Lessing adopted in 1981 to test her suspicion that publishers' readers, editors and reviewers respond more to an author's name than to the work itself. Her regular hardback and paperback houses both rejected *The Diary of a Good Neighbour* before it was accepted by Michael Joseph, who published her first novel *The Grass is Singing* in 1950. The secret of Jane Somers survived a half-dozen mixed reviews, and even fewer for *If the Old Could . . .* earlier this year.

While the first novel was, in Lessing's words, "a little experiment", the composition of a second can only indicate that she was enjoying the freedom of anonymity. ("As Jane Somers I wrote in ways that Doris Lessing cannot.") Obviously, since first learning who the author really was, Michael Joseph has been eagerly awaiting the day of this reissue, to bask in the publicity and count the takings. Lessing accepts, however disapprovingly, that publishers' promotion departments cannot function with "no 'personality', no photograph, no story. In other words, in order to sell a book, in order to bring it to attention, you need more than the book, you need the television appearance." This she duly provided, revealing her "story" in an interview on Channel 4 on the eve of publication of *The Diaries of Jane Somers*. And it is hard to see what, other than publicity, Lessing's experiment actually achieved. Jane Somers's rejection slips showed that often it is indeed the famous name that is the impediment, not the work itself; but no one who notices public reading habits would ever have expected otherwise. Lessing takes pleasure, "frankly if faintly malicious", in the fact that among reviewers not one "avowed devotee" of her work penetrated her disguise; but she knows as well as we do that, the *Quixote* of Pierre Menard is not at all the same thing as the *Quixote* of Miguel de Cervantes. If it were, should she not be "frankly if faintly" ashamed to find that out of the spotlight of fame her current work attracts no more – even rather less – notice than the average first work of the average new novelist?

Henry Williamson's fifteen-volume sequence of novels about family life in turn-of-the-century South London suburbia *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* is being released in paperback Volumes One; *The Dark Lantern* (432pp. Zenith/Arrow Books. £3.50) and *Two, Donkey Boy* (400pp. Zenith/Arrow. £3.50) are already available; the remaining volumes will be published over the next few years.

Below the city on the hill

Mary Kathleen Benet

JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS
Machine Dreams
331pp. Faber. £8.95.
0571 133983

Apart from some politicians in an election year, everyone admits that America is a flawed paradise, that not everybody lives in the city on the hill. But it takes an accomplished novelist to demonstrate how far away the American dream can be for some citizens. Jayne Anne Phillips, in her first novel (she is the author of a fine collection of short stories, *Black Tickets*), here shows herself to be such a writer.

Her story is refracted through the viewpoints of four members of a family. Mother Jean and father Mitch have memories of the Second World War and of the transition from a life of coal mining and small farming in West Virginia to a world of construction work, used cars, unemployment and Jean's eventual knowledge that "it turned out I couldn't keep anyone safe."

Their children, Danner and Billy, have a different culture that is early the same – the same sexual misdeeds and accidental alliances,

and a war of their own, Vietnam. Danner, like her mother, knows of war only as something that takes men abroad (for the first and only time in the lives of any of these characters) and wrecks them. Patriotism, the government, the authority behind all this, is represented only by the automaton-officer, trained to show blank official concern, who appears with the inevitable telegram.

War and peace are connected in the men's lives in ways they don't quite understand. Mitch is a salesman for the heavy strip-mining machinery that devastates his childhood paradise, the farm and its surrounding countryside of woods and streams with swimming holes. He brings similar machinery to the natives of New Guinea, then, back home, has nightmares about the horrors America and the war have unleashed upon this primitive land. But he doesn't make the conscious connection: spreading this version of the modern world is just what you do to make a precarious living. Similarly, Billy adores aeroplanes and as a child sneaks into the local air show. He makes no attempt to avoid the draft, though Danner urges him to, and the helicopters of Vietnam seem like something he has unconsciously been asking for all along.

Future shock

Neville Shack

JOYCE THOMPSON
Conscience Place
255pp. Viking. £8.95.
0670 800643
TREVOR BOYLE
Vail
188pp. John Calder. Paperback. £4.95.
07145 40552

In the era of nuclear fission most things might fall apart. The squeamish already identify the present day with an area of futuristic fiction; sentient human beings balk at becoming spooks. J. G. Ballard's dictum that the only truly alien planet is Earth stands vindicated. So, in fictional terms, you can grade subject-matter from the everyday-familiar to the almost unimaginable. These two novels try just that, projecting their content into a future which might be current next month or next year.

The texture of Joyce Thompson's *Conscience Place* is futuristic, the landscape abstracted from contemporary America, but its thrust comes from the implication that it could well be happening at this very moment; some of the features are either plausible or factual, or both. We are told about a President who tries to stimulate the economy by raising military spending to wartime levels and reduces environmental protections. The main setting of the story, though, is a secret even to him. There are chilling ironies involved where this parable about innocence overlaps with a recog-

nizable reality.

The Place is a self-contained refuge designed for the deformed children of workers who have had nuclear accidents and been exposed to radiation. Its original charter, sanctioned by President Kennedy, brought together humanitarian intent – care for genetic mutants – with motives of official expediency. The People, as they are described, remain oblivious to the outside world. The Fathers, scientific, paternalistic experts, monitor progress and engage in cultural conditioning. The most striking aspect of the mutants is that they are hermaphrodite; this helps to rule out reproduction. Another method used for preventing it is the invention of a concept, the Excitement, an auto-eroticism programmed to be the ultimate experience. All people are designated masculine. The Fathers fabricate a new order, starting from the first principles of perception.

Subversion eventually comes about through tampering with innocence. Bartholomew, a sensitive film-maker, strains against the limits of understanding and feeling imposed upon him. Brother Alice, an anthropologist outsider working in the Place and, for professional purposes, altered to a male identity, awakens his senses and enlightens him. Alice's own emotions have overcome the constraints of her position and combine with political disaffection. The eventual revolt is doomed, and a crack-down by the Fathers follows. In clandestine ways, however, the People's knowledge has been extended. Perhaps the more effective conspiracy now is the one which keeps the outside world in the dark. Here the author has

managed not to exclude any possibility at the end. The story is not original by any means, but Joyce Thompson brings it off in a style of dipped lyricism and carefully weighed sentences; shades of Ray Bradbury inscribing a Martian postcard home.

At a time when depictions of life after the nuclear holocaust inflate in our imaginations, it is easy to discount the terrifying potential that lies around, whether or not we include the Bomb's climactic moment. *Vail* takes it for granted that the social and physical terrain of England in the not-too-distant future resembles a slag-heap. Of course, everything is oddball, turning suffocatingly unwholesome. Pollution flourishes everywhere, an endless putrescence of consumerism; showbiz, media garbage and warfare dominate the streets of London. The topography has been hit by future-shock. Harrods has an average of ten bomb alerts and three actual blasts a week. The popular reflexes of blitz patriotism and cheque-book journalism's voyeurism jump off the page. The extremism of all this serves a comedy which is even blacker than the diesel and grime with which the eponymous hero covers his head for his appearance on television, fronting a programme called *Bootsnaps*.

Vail has ended up in the capital after his wife and daughter have both met bad ends during a motorway journey. Soon after his arrival he becomes a pawn for nefarious interests, and is sucked into a whirlpool of grotesques, nymphomaniacs and pawns. Huge vices surface commonplace careerism. Vail indulges both his paranoia and the illusion of serendipity. These give rise to the funniest scenes. Episode follows episode, interspersed with some reassuring, tongue-in-cheek pre-existentialism. Vail still professes, more than half-way through the book, a touching faith in the ordered mechanism of the universe and in the opposing poles of the electromagnetic spectrum. Entropy finally catches up with him. The scenario collapses into total anarchy, and its earlier thrills are overwhelmed by a mayhem of espionage and mad opportunism.

In 100 Great Fantasy Short Stories, edited by Isaac Asimov, Terry Carr and Martin H. Greenberg (311pp. Robson. £8.95. 0 86051 301 7), the work of, among others, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Brian Eillon, Barry N. Malzberg, Roger Zelazny, Avram Davidson, Fredric Brown, Gene Wolfe, H.P. Lovecraft, André Maurois, Joanna Russ, Edgar Pangborn, Jack Dann, Bill Pronzini, Edward D. Hoch, Donald A. Woolhaim, Terry Carr, James Salis, Robert Sheckley and Jane Yolen attempts to live up to the publishers' not immediately comprehensible claim that "Nothing and everything make a sense of the kind only found in the 'might be' realms of fantasy." More reassuringly, we discover that "history is scrambled and reordered with disconcerting precision; contemporary life leaps out of focus".

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